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CONTENTS.

Page

MEMOIR OF THE REV. ROBERT HALL, BY DR. GREGORY . . . 1

OBSERVATIONS ON MR. HALL'S CHARACTER AS A PREACHER, BY JOHN FOSTER 65

CHRISTIANITY CONSISTENT WITH A LOVE OF FREEDOM 117
Preface 119
Note by the Editor 120

SECTION I.

On the Duty of common Christians in relation to Civil Polity . 122

SECTION II.

On the Duty of Ministers in respect to Civil Polity 130

SECTION III.

On the Pretences Mr. Clayton advances in favour of his Principles 138

SECTION IV.

On the Test Act 147

AN APOLOGY FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 157
Advertisement to the Third Edition 159
Original Preface 161
Advertisement to the New Edition 169

SECTION I.

On the Right of Public Discussion 171

SECTION II.

On Associations 178

SECTION III.

On a Reform of Parliament 184

SECTION IV.

On Theories and the Rights of Man 195

Section V.

Page

On Dissenters 205

Section VI.

On the Causes of the Present Discontents 216

Review of the Apology for the Freedom of the Press . . 228

Mr. Hall's Reply 233
Note by the Editor 244

Modern Infidelity Considered 247
Preface 249
Note by the Editor 253
Sermon 256
Note 297

Reflections on War 299
Preface 301
Sermon 302
Account of the Cambridge Benevolent Society 325

The Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis 329
Advertisement 331
Preface to the Second Edition 332
Sermon 336

The Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes . . 373
Advertisement 375
Sermon 376

A Sermon on the Death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales 391

Reviews.
Foster's Essays 427
Custance on the Constitution 447
Zeal without Innovation 454
Gisborne's Sermons 504
Gregory's Letters 515
Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey 543

General Index 566

A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

THE REV. ROBERT HALL, A.M.

Robert Hall was born at Arnsby, a village about eight miles from Leicester, on the 2nd of May, 1764. His father was descended from a respectable family of yeomanry in Northumberland, whence he removed to Arnsby in 1753, on being chosen the pastor of a Baptist congregation in that place.

Robert, while an infant, was so delicate and feeble, that it was scarcely expected he would reach maturity. Until he was two years of age he could neither walk nor talk. He was carried about in the arms of a nurse, who was kept for him alone, and who was directed to take him close after the plough in the field, and at other times to the sheep-pen, from a persuasion, very prevalent in the midland counties, that the exhalations from newly-ploughed land, and from sheep in the fold, are salubrious and strengthening. Adjacent to his father's dwelling-house was a burial-ground; and the nurse, a woman of integrity and intelligence, judging from his actions that he was desirous to learn the meaning of the inscriptions on the grave-stones, and of the various figures carved upon them, managed, by the aid of those inscriptions, to teach him the letters of the alphabet, then to group them into syllables and words, and thus, at length, to read and speak. No sooner was his tongue loosed by this unusual but efficient process, than his advance became constantly marked. Having acquired the ability to speak, his constitutional ardour at once

appeared. He was incessantly asking questions, and became a great and a *rapid* talker. One day, when he was about three years old, on his expressing disapprobation of some person who spoke quickly, his mother reminded him that *he* spoke very fast; "*No*," said he, "*I only keep at it.*"

Like many others who were born in villages, he received his first regular instructions (after he left his nurse's arms) at a dame's school. Dame *Scotton* had the honour of being his first professional instructor. From her he was transferred to a Mrs. *Lyley*, in the same village. While under their care he evinced an extraordinary thirst for knowledge, and became a collector of books. In the summer season, after the school hours were over, he would put his richly prized library, among which was an Entick's Dictionary, into his pinafore, steal into the grave-yard (which, from an early and fixed association, he regarded as his study), lie down upon the grass, spread his books around him, and there remain until the deepening shades of evening compelled him to retire into the house.

At about six years of age he was placed, as a day-scholar, under the charge of a Mr. *Simmons*, of Wigston, a village about four miles from Arnsby. At first, he walked to school in the mornings and home again in the evenings. But the severe pain in his back, from which he suffered so much through life, had even then begun to distress him; so that he was often obliged to lie down upon the road, and sometimes his brother John and his other schoolfellows carried him, in turn, he repaying them during their labour by relating some amusing story, or detailing some of the interesting results of his reading. On his father's ascertaining his inability to walk so far daily, he took lodgings for him and his brother at the house of a friend in the village: after this arrangement was made they went to Wigston on the Monday mornings, and returned to Arnsby on the Saturday afternoons.

The course of instruction at Mr. Simmons's school was not very extensive; and Robert was not likely to restrict himself as a student to its limits. On starting from home on the Monday, it was his practice to take with him two or three books from his father's library, that he might read them in the intervals between the school hours. The books he selected were not those of mere amusement, but such as required deep and serious thought. The works of Jonathan Edwards, for example, were among his favourites; and it is an ascertained fact, that before he was nine years of age, he had perused and reperused, with intense interest, the treatises of that profound and extraordinary thinker, on the 'Affections,' and on the 'Will.' About the same time he read, with a like interest, 'Butler's Analogy.' He used to ascribe his early predilection for this class of studies, in great measure, to his intimate association, in mere childhood, with a tailor, one of his father's congregation, a very shrewd, well-informed man, and an acute metaphysician. Before he was ten years old, he had written many essays, principally on religious subjects; and often invited his brother and sisters to hear him preach. About this time, too, in one of those anticipatory distributions of a father's property, which I apprehend are not unusual with boys, he proposed that his brother should have the cows, sheep, and pigs, on their father's death, and leave him "all the books." These juvenile "dividers of the "inheritance" seem to have overlooked their sisters; unless, indeed, they assigned them the furniture. The incident, however, is mentioned simply to show what it was that Robert even then most prized.

He remained at Mr. Simmons's school until he was eleven years of age, when this conscientious master informed the father that he was quite unable to keep pace with his pupil, declaring that he had been often obliged to sit up all night to prepare the lessons for the morning; a practice he could

no longer continue, and must therefore relinquish his favourite scholar.

The proofs of extraordinary talent and of devotional feeling, which Robert had now for some time exhibited, not only gratified his excellent parents, but seemed to mark the expediency and propriety of devoting him to the sacred office; but the delicate health of the son, and the narrow means of the father, occasioned some perplexity. Mr. Hall, therefore, took his son to Kettering, in order that he might avail himself of the advice of an influential and valued friend residing there, Mr. Beeby Wallis. Their interview soon led to the choice of a suitable boarding school; but the pallid and sickly appearance of the boy exciting Mr. Wallis's sympathy, he prevailed upon his father to leave him at his house for a few weeks, in the hope that change of air would improve his health. This gentleman was so greatly astonished at the precocity of talent of his youthful visitor, that he several times requested him to deliver a short address to a select auditory invited for the purpose. The juvenile orator often afterwards adverted to the injury done him by the incongruous elevation to which he was thus raised. "Mr. Wallis," said he, "was "one whom everybody loved. He belonged to a family in "which probity, candour, and benevolence constituted the "general likeness; but conceive, Sir, if you can, the egre- "gious impropriety of setting a boy of eleven to preach to a "company of grave gentlemen, full half of whom wore wigs. "I never call the circumstance to mind but with grief at the "vanity it inspired; nor, when I think of such mistakes of "good men, am I inclined to question the correctness of "Baxter's language, strong as it is, where he says, 'Nor "should men turn preachers as the river Nilus breed frogs "(saith Herodotus), when one half *moveth* before the other is "*made*, and while it is yet *but plain mud!*"*

* 'Saint's Rest,' Preface to Part II., original edition.

Robert's health appearing much improved from his short residence at Kettering, he was placed by his father, as a boarder, at the school of the Rev. *John Ryland*, in the neighbouring town of Northampton. He remained under Mr. Ryland's care but little more than a year and a half; during which, however, according to his father's testimony, "he made great progress in Latin and Greek;" while, in his own judgment, the principle of emulation was called into full activity, the habit of composition was brought into useful exercise, the leading principles of abstract science were collected, and a thirst for knowledge of every kind acquired. It should also be mentioned here, that it was during the time Robert was Mr. Ryland's pupil, that he heard a sermon preached at Northampton, by Mr. Robins, of Daventry, whose religious instruction, conveyed "in language of the "most classic purity," at once "impressive and delightful," excited his early relish for chaste and elegant composition.

From the time he quitted Northampton, until he entered the "Bristol Education Society," or academy, for the instruction of young men preparing for the ministerial office among the Baptists, he studied divinity, and some collateral subjects, principally under the guidance of his father, with occasional hints from his acute metaphysical friend, still residing in the same village. Having, in this interval, given satisfactory proofs of his piety, and of a strong predilection for the pastoral office, he was placed at the Bristol Institution, upon Dr. Ward's foundation, in October, 1778, being then in his fifteenth year. He pursued his studies with great ardour and perseverance; became an early riser; and it was remarked in consequence, that he was often ready to attend the tutor for the morning lessons, before some of his fellow-students had commenced their preparation.

The system of instruction at Bristol comprehended not merely the learned languages and the rudiments of science,

but a specific course of preparation for the ministerial office, including the habit of public speaking. Essays and theses on appropriate topics were written and delivered, under the direction of the tutors; religious exercises were carefully attended to; and the students were appointed, in turn, to speak or preach upon subjects selected by the president. Among the books first put into Mr. Hall's hands to prepare him for these exercises, was Gibbon's Rhetoric, which he read with the utmost avidity, and often mentioned in after life, as rekindling the emotion excited by Mr. Robins's preaching, improving his sensibility to the utility as well as beauty of fine writing, and creating an intense solicitude to acquire an elegant as well as a perspicuous style. He was therefore, more active in this department of academical labour than many of his compeers. Usually, however, after his written compositions had answered the purpose for which they were prepared, he made no effort to preserve them; but either carelessly threw them aside, or distributed them among his associates, if they expressed any desire to possess them. Some of these early productions, therefore, have escaped the corrosions of time. The only one which I have been able to obtain is an essay on 'Ambition,' in which there is more of the tumultuary flourish of the orator than he would ever have approved after he reached his twentieth year. Nor was it correct in sentiment. The sole species of excellence recommended to be pursued was superiority of intellect; all moral qualities, as well as actions directed to the promotion of numan welfare, being entirely overlooked.

Indeed, there is reason to apprehend that at this period of his life, Mr. Hall, notwithstanding the correctness and excellence of his general principles, and the regularity of his devotional habits, had set too high an estimate on merely intellectual attainments, and valued himself, not more perhaps than was natural to youth, yet too much, on the extent of his

mental possessions. No wonder, then, that he should experience salutary mortification. And thus it happened. He was appointed, agreeably to the arrangements already mentioned, to deliver an address in the vestry of Broadmead Chapel, on 1 Tim. iv. 10. "Therefore, we both labour and "suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is "the Saviour of all men; specially of those that believe." After proceeding, for a short time, much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, covered his face with his hands, exclaimed, "Oh! I have lost all my ideas," and sat down, his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors, and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if once he acquired self-possession. He was therefore, appointed to speak again, on the same subject, at the same place, the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more grievous to bear. He hastened from the vestry, and on retiring to his room, exclaimed, "If *this* does not humble me, the devil *must* have "me!" Such were the early efforts of him whose humility afterwards became as conspicuous as his talents, and who, for nearly half a century, excited universal attention and admiration by the splendour of his pulpit eloquence.

Our student spent the first summer vacation after his entering the Bristol institution, under the paternal roof at Arnsby; and, in the course of that residence at home, accompanied his father to some public religious service at Clipstone, a village in Northamptonshire. Mr. Hall, senior, and Mr. Beddome of Bourton, well known by his Hymns, and his truly valuable Sermons, were both engaged to preach. But the latter, being much struck with the appearance, and some of the remarks, of the son of his friend, was exceedingly

anxious that *he* should preach in the evening, and proposed to relinquish his own engagement, rather than be disappointed. To this injudicious proposal, after resisting every importunity for some time, he at length yielded; and entered the pulpit to address an auditory of *ministers*, many of whom he had been accustomed from his infancy to regard with the utmost reverence. He selected for his text 1 John i. 5, "God is light, "and in Him is no darkness at all;" and, it is affirmed, treated this mysterious and awful subject with such metaphysical acumen, and drew from it such an impressive application, as excited the deepest interest.

On the arrival of the summer vacation, in 1780, he again visited Arnsby; and during the period he then remained at home, his father became fully satisfied that his piety was genuine, as well as that his qualifications for the office of a preacher were of a high order. He therefore expressed to many of his friends his desire that he should be "set apart to "the sacred work." Solicitous not to be led aside from a correct judgment by the partiality of a father, he resolved that the church over which he was pastor should judge of his son's fitness, and recognize their conviction by a solemn act. The members of the church, after cautious and deliberate inquiry, ratified the decision of the anxious parent, and earnestly and unanimously requested "that Robert Hall, jun., might be set "apart to public employ."

In little more than a year after Mr. Hall had been thus publicly designated a preacher of the Gospel, having pursued his studies at Bristol with great assiduity and corresponding success, he was appointed to King's College, Aberdeen, on Dr. Ward's foundation.

The lamented death of Sir James Mackintosh has left a blank which none can adequately fill, with regard to Mr. Hall's character, habits, and the developement of his intellectual

powers at this period. On application, however, to an esteemed friend, Professor Paul, he has kindly communicated a few particulars, which I shall give in his own language.

"What I now transmit is drawn from the College records, from the recollection of Dr. Jack, Principal of King's College, and formerly for three years a class-fellow of Mr. Hall, and from my own knowledge; for I also was a cotemporary of Mr. Hall, having commenced my first year's studies when he commenced his fourth. It appears from the album that Mr. Hall entered college in the beginning of November 1781. His first year was spent principally under the tuition of Mr. Professor Leslie, in the acquisition of the Greek language; his second, third, and fourth years under that of Mr. Professor Macleod, when he studied mathematics, natural philosophy, and moral philosophy. He took his degree in arts (*i. e.* A.M. degree) on the 30th of March, 1785. Principal Jack says that he attended the Professor of Humanity, Mr. Ogilvie, during the four years he was at college, both for Latin and Natural History; but as there is no record of the students of the humanity and natural history classes, this fact depends wholly on the Principal's recollection. I learn from the same source that Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Hall, while at college, read a great deal of Greek in private, and that their reputation was high among their fellow-students for their attainments in that language. Principal Jack also bears testimony to Mr. Hall's great success in his mathematical and philosophical studies, and affirms that he was the first scholar of his class, in the various branches of education taught at college. During one of the sessions the Principal was member of a select literary society, consisting of only eight or ten students, of which society Sir James and Mr. Hall were the distinguished ornaments. None of Mr. Hall's college exercises are now to be found in this place; but my impressions correspond with those of the Principal, that his acquirements were of the very first order: and as Sir James had left college before I entered, having received his A.M. degree 30th March, 1784, there was no one at college in my time who could be at all put in competition with Mr. Hall. But it was not as a scholar alone that Mr. Hall's reputation was great at college. He was considered by all the students as a model of correct and regular deportment, of religious and moral habits, of friendly and benevolent affections."

To this concise summary, I subjoin the few particulars which I gathered from Sir James Mackintosh himself.

When these two eminent men first became acquainted,

Sir James was in his eighteenth year, Mr. Hall about a year older. Sir James described Mr. Hall as attracting notice by a most ingenuous and intelligent countenance, by the liveliness of his manner, and by such indications of mental activity as could not be misinterpreted. His appearance was that of health, yet not of robust health; and he often suffered from paroxysms of pain, during which he would roll about on the carpet in the utmost agony; but no sooner had the pain subsided than he would resume his part in conversation with as much cheerfulness and vivacity as before he had been thus interrupted. Sir James said he became attached to Mr. Hall, "because he could not help it." There wanted many of the supposed constituents of friendship. Their tastes at the commencement of their intercourse were widely different; and upon most of the important topics of inquiry there was no congeniality of sentiment; yet, notwithstanding this, the *substratum* of their minds seemed of the same cast, and upon this, Sir James thought, the edifice of their mutual regard first rested. Yet he, ere long, became fascinated by his brilliancy and acumen, in love with his cordiality and ardour, and "awe-struck" (I think that was the term employed) by the transparency of his conduct and the purity of his principles. They read together; they sat together at lecture, if possible; they walked together. In their joint studies, they read much of Xenophon and Herodotus, and more of Plato; and so well was all this known, exciting admiration in some, in others envy, that it was not unusual, as they went along, for their class-fellows to point at them and say, "*There go Plato and "Hērodōtus.*" But the arena in which they met most frequently was that of morals and metaphysics; furnishing topics of incessant disputation. After having sharpened their weapons by reading, they often repaired to the spacious sands upon the sea-shore, and still more frequently to the picturesque scenery on the banks of the Don, above the old town, to discuss with

eagerness the various subjects to which their attention had been directed. There was scarcely an important position in Berkeley's 'Minute Philosopher,' in Butler's 'Analogy,' or in 'Edwards on the Will,' over which they had not thus debated with the utmost intensity. Night after night, nay, month after month, for two sessions, they met only to study or to dispute; yet no unkindly feeling ensued. The process seemed rather, like blows in that of welding iron, to knit them closer together. Sir James said, that his companion as well as himself often contended for victory, yet never, so far as he could then judge, did either make a voluntary sacrifice of truth, or stoop to draw to and fro the *serra* λογομαχίας, as is too often the case with ordinary controvertists. From these discussions, and from subsequent meditation upon them, Sir James learnt more *as to principles* (such, at least, he assured me was his deliberate conviction) than from all the books he ever read. On the other hand, Mr. Hall through life reiterated his persuasion, that his friend possessed an intellect more analogous to that of Bacon than any person of modern times; and that if he had devoted his powerful understanding to metaphysics, instead of law and politics, he would have thrown an unusual light upon that intricate but valuable region of inquiry. Such was the cordial, reciprocal testimony of these two distinguished men. And, in many respects —latterly, I hope and believe, in *all* the most essential—it might be truly said of both, "As face answereth to face in a "glass, so does the heart of man to his friend."

Shortly after Mr. Hall's return to Aberdeen, in November, 1783, he received an invitation from the church at Broadmead to associate himself with Dr. Caleb Evans, as the assistant pastor; an invitation which he accepted with much doubt and diffidence. After some correspondence, it was arranged that Mr. Hall should reside at Bristol in the interval (of nearly six months) between the college sessions of 1784 and 1785,

and then return to Aberdeen to complete his course. In this important session, from the beginning of November, 1784, to May, 1785, he seems to have devoted himself most sedulously to his studies; especially the Greek language, with moral and intellectual philosophy, and those other departments of inquiry which are most intimately related to theology.

By the time Mr. Hall had thus completed his academical course, his mental powers, originally strong, had attained an extraordinary vigour; and with the exception of the Hebrew language, of which he then knew nothing, he had become rich in literary, intellectual, and biblical acquisition. On resuming his labours at Broadmead, in conjunction with Dr. Evans, his preaching excited an unusual attention; the place of worship was often crowded to excess; and many of the most distinguished men in Bristol, including several clergymen, were among his occasional auditors.

This popularity not only continued, but increased, until he removed to another sphere of action. The brilliancy and force of his eloquence were universally acknowledged, while, in private life, his instructive and fascinating conversation drew equal admiration. Yet it ought not to be concealed (for I simply announce his own deliberate conviction, frequently expressed in after-life) that at this time he was very inadequately qualified for the duties of a minister of the Gospel.

Considering his early age, twenty-one, it was manifestly unfavourable to the correct developement of his character *as a preacher*, that in August, 1785, only three months after his quitting Aberdeen, he was appointed classical tutor in the Bristol Academy, on the resignation of Mr. Newton. That additional appointment he held for more than five years, and discharged its duties with marked zeal and activity, and with commensurate success.

At this period of his life he was celebrated as a satirist, and

would overwhelm such of his associates as tempted him to the use of those formidable weapons, with wit and raillery, not always playful. Aware, however, that this propensity was calculated to render him unamiable, and to give permanent pain to others (a result which the generosity of his disposition made him anxious to avoid), he endeavoured to impose a restraint upon himself, by writing the Essay on the 'Character of Cleander;' in which he exposes, with just severity, that species of sarcasm to which he believed himself most prone; and thus, by its publication, gave to others the opportunity, when he slid into this practice, of reproving him in his own language.

When Mr. Hall was about twenty-three years of age, he had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Robinson, his predecessor at Cambridge, preach; and was so fascinated with his manner as to resolve to *imitate* it. But, after a few trials, he relinquished the attempt. The circumstance being afterwards alluded to, he observed, "Why, Sir, I was too proud to "*remain* an imitator. After my second trial, as I was "walking home, I heard one of the congregation say to "another, 'Really, Mr. Hall *did remind* us of Mr. Robin-"son!' That, Sir, was a knock-down blow to my vanity; "and I at once resolved that if ever I *did* acquire reputa-"tion, it should be my own reputation, belong to my own "character, and not be that of *a likeness*. Besides, Sir,* if I "had not been a foolish young man, I should have seen "how ridiculous it was to imitate such a preacher as Mr. "Robinson. He had a musical voice, and was master of all "its intonations; he had wonderful self-possession, and could "say *what* he pleased, *when* he pleased, and *how* he pleased; "while my voice and manner were naturally bad; and far "from having self-command, I never entered the pulpit,

* Mr. Hall very frequently repeated the word *sir* in his conversation, especially if he became animated.

" without omitting to say something that I wished to say, and " saying something that I wished unsaid : and beside all this, " I ought to have known that for me *to speak slow was* " *ruin.*" " Why so?" " I wonder that you, a student of " philosophy, should ask such a question. You know, Sir, " that force, or momentum, is conjointly as the body and " velocity ; therefore, as my voice is feeble, what is wanted " in body must be made up in velocity, or there will not be, " cannot be, any impression."

This remark, though thrown off hastily, in unreserved conversation, presents the theory of *one* important cause of the success of his rapid eloquence.

A serious trial now awaited Mr. Hall—a painful misunderstanding between him and his friend and colleague Dr. Evans. It continued not only to disturb the minds of both, but, as might be expected, to create partisans among their respective friends, and indeed to endanger the peace of the church at Broadmead for more than two years. I have read various written papers, and some pamphlets, which relate to this painful affair ; and cannot but conclude that, like many others, it originated in such trifling misconceptions as, in more felicitous circumstances, neither party would have suffered to disturb his thoughts for an hour. A few hasty expressions, retorted by others both hasty and strong, tempted the Doctor and his friends to accuse Mr. Hall of ingratitude, and a want of deference to his superior in age and station ; he in his turn repelled the accusation in language too natural to a young man glowing with a lofty spirit of independence ; and thus, new charges and fresh recriminations arose. The interposition of friends availed but little ; for their unhallowed passions became ignited too. After many months spent in this unseemly strife, a meeting between the belligerent parties was held in the presence of two friends of each, at the Mansion House, the Mayor of Bristol being one of the persons chosen

by Dr. Evans. No beneficial effects resulted from this meeting; the individuals who hoped by their interposition to ensure the restoration of amity having long before ceased to be impartial judges in the affair. The parties on both sides, who were convened on this occasion, published their respective statements; from which it appears that one of them thought Mr. Hall justifiable, and censured Dr. Evans; while the other approved of the Doctor's conduct, and condemned that of Mr. Hall.

It will not, then, be expected, that I should draw from the obscurity which time has cast over them more particulars relating to this unhappy collision. Nor, indeed, should I have adverted to it, had it not operated strongly in preparing Mr. Hall for his removal from Bristol. Whatever regret it might occasion him, on subsequent meditation, it excited no self-reproach, nor left any malevolent feeling. On the decease of Dr. Evans, which took place in 1791, his former colleague prepared an inscription for his monument; and he wrote to his brother-in-law, Mr. Isaac James, in the following terms:—

"I think you and all my friends ought now to bury all that "is past, and renew a connexion with the church, if their "temper will permit you. My friends *will most oblige me* "by carrying it respectfully to the Doctor's family and me-"mory. 'Anger may glance into the bosom of a wise man, "but it rests only in the bosom of fools;' and our best improve-"ment of the death of this useful servant of God will be to "imitate his excellences and forget his errors."

Mr. Hall, who by this time had attained a high reputation as a preacher, was invited, in June or July 1790, to preach at Cambridge for one month; after which the invitation was renewed for a longer term. In July, the following year, he was invited to take the pastoral charge, and he accepted the important trust.

In these transactions and their consequences *still* unfolding, the wisdom and mercy of God are strikingly manifested. There was at this time no man of eminence among the Baptists, besides Mr. Hall, who could for a moment have been thought of by the church at Cambridge as a fit successor to Mr. Robinson; nor was there any Baptist church and congregation with which *he* could become connected, with the same prospect of being useful and happy, according to the views he then entertained. Had Mr. Hall's religious principles and feelings been such in 1790 and 1791 as they became a few years afterwards, not even *his* talents would have made them palatable; and a connexion, had it been formed, would soon have been dissolved: on the other hand, had the church been decidedly and entirely Socinianized, he could not conscientiously have become its pastor. The providential co-relation soon began to show itself. *Their* looseness of sentiment on many points, which even then he thought momentous, led him to enforce them frequently with the utmost energy; while *his* known freedom of opinion on other points, which they also had been led to canvass freely, preserved him from the odium of orthodoxy. Thinking themselves liberal and unshackled, they could not but congratulate one another that their new pastor, a man of splendid talents, was *almost* as liberal and unshackled as they were. Then again, their want of devotional seriousness, by the force of contrast, heightened his estimate of the value of true piety; and this produced an augmented earnestness and fidelity, which they first learnt to tolerate, and afterwards to admire. Thus, by the operation of an incessant action and re-action, continued for years, each party exerted a salutary influence on the other; and at length both church and pastor became so distinguished for piety, harmony, and affection, that they who had known and lamented their former state, were compelled to exclaim, "This hath God wrought."

The death of Mr. Hall's father, which occurred in March 1791, had indeed tended greatly to bring his mind to the state of serious thought with which he entered upon the pastoral office. Meditating with the deepest veneration upon the unusual excellences of a parent now for ever lost to him, he was led to investigate, with renewed earnestness, the truth as well as value of those high and sacred principles from which his eminent piety and admirable consistency so evidently flowed. He called to mind, too, several occasions on which his father, partly by the force of reason, partly by that of tender expostulation, had exhorted him to abandon the vague and dangerous speculations to which he was prone. Some important changes in Mr. Hall's sentiments resulted from an inquiry conducted under such solemn impressions; and among these may be mentioned his renunciation of *materialism*, which he often declared he "buried in his father's "grave."

Attentive to the voice of heavenly admonition, thus addressing him from various quarters, he entered upon his new duties with earnest desires that he might be able "to commend him-"self to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Feeling that to him was consigned the charge of transforming, with God's assistance, a cold and sterile soil into a fruitful field, he determined not to satisfy himself with half measures, but proceeded to expose error, and defend what he regarded as essential truth. The first sermon, therefore, which he delivered at Cambridge, after he had assumed the office of pastor, was on the doctrine of the atonement, and its practical tendencies. Immediately after the conclusion of the service, one of the congregation, who had followed poor Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went into the vestry, and said, "Mr. Hall, this preaching won't do for us: it will only suit "a congregation of old women." "Do you mean my sermon, "sir, or the doctrine?" "Your *doctrine*." "Why is it that

" the *doctrine* is fit only for old women?" " Because it may " suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the " grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort." " Thank you, " sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not *suit* people " of *any* age, unless it be true; and if it *be true*, it is not fitted " for old women alone, but is equally important at *every* age." This individual, and three or four other men of influence, with about twenty from the poorer classes, shortly afterwards withdrew from the congregation.

Mr. Hall's ministerial labours, at this interesting period of his life, were blessed with the happiest results, when the benefit seemed likely to be for a while suspended by the intrusion of *violent* political discussion. The impression made throughout Europe by the French revolution of 1789 was such that not merely here and there an individual indulged in political speculation, but almost every man threw himself into the vortex of controversy.

At such a season Mr. Hall, then under thirty years of age, was not likely to maintain an entire silence. When a man's quiescence was sufficient to render his principles equivocal, *he* was certainly not one who would make a secret of his opinions. He hesitated not to avow that the grand object of all good government must be to promote the happiness of the governed, to assist every individual in its attainment and security. He regarded a government chiefly anxious about the emoluments of office, or aiming to consolidate its own power at home and to aid the efforts of despots abroad, while it neglected the comfort and welfare of individuals in middle or lower life, whose burdens it augmented by a mistaken course, as a government that should be *constitutionally* opposed by every lawful means. Could it then be matter of surprise that, believing and feeling this, he should exult when " the " empire of darkness and of despotism had been smitten with a " stroke which sounded through the universe;" or, when other

ministers of the Gospel were signalizing themselves by opposing this view of things, that he should, for a short interval, be drawn aside from pursuits more congenial with his prevailing tastes, and, in some important respects, I think, more compatible with his holy calling, and at once endeavour to prove that "Christianity is consistent with a love of freedom," and that true Christianity will prevail most where genuine freedom is most diffused and best understood?

Cordial, however, as was Mr. Hall's attachment to a cause in which he conceived man's best interests to be closely interwoven, and strong as was his hatred of despotic measures, or what he regarded as such, either at home or abroad, I do not think that even their joint operation would have overcome his repugnance to writing, had it not been for skilful *abettors*, who first worked upon his feelings, and then extorted from him the promise of preparing a work for the public. Such, if I have not been misinformed, was the origin of his first political pamphlet; and such, I know, from his own declaration, often repeated, was the origin of the eloquent and powerful 'Apology for the Freedom of the Press.' The evening after the event occurred to which he alludes in the 'Apology,' he attended a periodical meeting of a Book-society, constituted principally of members of his own congregation, and of Mr. Simeon's, and usually denominated *Alderman Ind's Club*, that distinguished ornament of Mr. Simeon's congregation being the treasurer. Every person present expressed himself in terms of the strongest indignation at the insult offered to Mr. Musgrave; every one thought it highly desirable that some man of talent *at Cambridge* should advocate the principles maintained by the friends of liberty, especially of those who avowed evangelical sentiments, and the necessity for their united activity, in the present state of the country and of Europe. Mr. Hall spoke as decidedly as any of them with regard to the urgent necessities of the case;

when they all, having brought him precisely into the position at which they were aiming, exclaimed, that it was he to whom alone they could look in this exigency. "Alderman Ind, you "know, sir (said he), was an excellent man; pure as a "seraph, and gentle as a lamb. I thought that if *he* felt "roused, if *he* could join with the rest in urging me, I might "bring all hesitation to a truce; and so, in an evil hour, I "yielded to their entreaties. I went home to my lodgings, "and began to write immediately; sat up all night; and, "wonderful for me, kept up the intellectual ferment for "almost a month; and then the thing was done. I revised "it a little as it went through the press; but I have ever "since regretted that I wrote so hastily and superficially upon "some subjects brought forward, which required touching "with a master-hand, and exploring to their very founda-"tions. So far as I understand the purely political principles "which are advanced in that pamphlet, they are, I believe, "correct: at all events they are mine still. But, I repeat it, "I yielded in an evil hour; especially if I had any wish to "obtain permanent reputation as a political writer. Per-"haps, however, the pamphlet had its use in those perilous "times." Such was Mr. Hall's account of this publication.

But, whatever might be Mr. Hall's opinion of this work, it does not seem to have been regarded by the public as of little value. Three editions were called for, I believe, within less than six months; and then, the author not sanctioning a republication, various editions were printed and circulated surreptitiously. Its more splendid and impressive passages were repeatedly quoted in the periodicals of the day, and many of its arguments were cited as perfectly conclusive. It was also widely circulated in America; and is there still regarded as having been powerfully influential in diffusing those liberal political principles which of late have acquired so marked an ascendency in Britain.

Mr. Hall, however, experienced such inconveniences from his political celebrity, as induced him to recede, not from his principles, or from the avowal of them in private, but from the farther advocacy of them in public. It forced upon him the society of men whose conduct and character he could not approve; it tended to draw him, much more than he could conscientiously justify, from retirement and study; and thus, ere long, he became of opinion, to adopt his own words, "that the Christian ministry is in danger of losing something "of its energy and sanctity, by embarking on the stormy "element of political debate." His elegant eulogium on Dr. Priestley, in his first pamphlet, and the warm terms of admiration in which he used to speak of him in private, tempted many to fancy and to say that he also was a Socinian at heart; and although his preaching became more and more distinguished by the introduction and energetic application of evangelical truth, he still found himself often so equivocally placed as to render his denial of Socinianism quite imperative. On one of these occasions, Mr. Hall having, in his usual terms, panegyrized. Dr Priestley, a gentleman who held the Doctor's theological opinions, tapping Mr. Hall upon the shoulder with an indelicate freedom from which he recoiled, said, "Ah, sir, we shall have *you* among us soon, I see." Mr. Hall, startled and offended by the rude tone of exultation in which this was uttered, hastily replied, "*Me* amongst *you*, "sir! *me* amongst *you!* Why, if that were ever the case, "I should deserve to be tied to the tail of the great red "dragon, and whipped round the nethermost regions to all "eternity."

Mr. Hall's personal habits, not only at the time of which I am now speaking, but in a certain degree through life, though not precisely those of an absent man, were those of one whose mental occupations kept his thoughts at a distance from various matters of ordinary observance, and made him

regardless of a thousand things which most persons never forget. Thus, on his return from an evening visit, if not watched, he would take a wrong hat or great-coat. If not sought after by some of the congregation, he would mistake the proper evening of a week-day service, having in such cases been so absorbed in study as to lose a day in his reckoning; for the same reason, he often mistook the day or the hour of an appointment. When on any of his journeys to London he engaged to take up the letters of his friends, it was not unusual, after his return, to find them all in his portmanteau or his great-coat pocket. These, or similar instances of forgetfulness, occurred daily; but, exciting the attention of his affectionate and watchful friends, they seldom exposed him to serious inconvenience.

None of these peculiarities sprung from an affectation of singularity; they simply marked an inattention to things of minor importance. Nor was there united with them a regardlessness of the proprieties of society, a disdain of such civilities and attentions as were usual in the classes with whom he most associated. He had never aimed to acquire a facility in the manners and habits of genteel life; but he had a native ease and grace, which was obviously distinguishable from any acquired habit. It was a grace that could neither be bought nor borrowed; on all proper occasions heightened by the dignity which naturally comported with his character and office; and uniformly blended with that genuine simplicity which often accompanies intellectual greatness, and is always, if I mistake not, an attribute of moral greatness.

I had the privilege of becoming first known to Mr. Hall in January, 1797. During that year we dined daily at the same table; the next year we met almost every morning to read together; and for some years afterwards scarcely a week passed in which I was not three or four times in his society. When I first became acquainted with him I was young, and

ignorant of nearly every thing but the most rudimental knowledge of language and science; of which I possessed just enough to employ as instruments of inquiry. I was eager to acquire information; but ran some risk of turning my mind to that which was useless, or merely showy, instead of directing its best energy to that which was truly valuable. In such circumstances, to be allowed the friendship and enjoy the advice and assistance of such a man, was among my richest blessings. Scarcely a thought worth preserving, scarcely a principle of action worth reducing to practice, scarcely a source of true enjoyment, but I derived from him, or I was led to receive, or to appreciate more correctly, through his agency. If, then, for some pages, my name should occur more often in immediate association with that of my beloved and revered friend than may seem consistent with ordinary rules, may I be freed from the charge of egotism? especially if I assure the reader, that while nothing affords me more pleasure, nothing awakens more gratitude to the Father of Mercies than the retrospect of the intellectual, and higher than intellectual delights, which were then mine, few things more humble me than the conviction that, though I enjoyed them so long, I suffered them to pass away without commensurate improvement.

When I first saw Mr. Hall, I was struck with his well-proportioned athletic figure, the unassuming dignity of his deportment, the winning frankness which marked all that he uttered, and the peculiarities of the most speaking countenance I ever contemplated, animated by eyes radiating with the brilliancy imparted to them by benevolence, wit, and intellectual energy. When he spoke, except in the most ordinary chit-chat, to which, however, he seldom descended, he seemed not merely to communicate his words, but himself: and I then first learnt the difference between one who feels while he is speaking, and whose communicative features tell

you that he does, and one who, after he has spoken long and with apparent earnestness, still does not feel. I then learnt also, that though talents may convey their results to others, and activity may carry on others in its stream, yet there is something distinct in the structure of a great mind which never can be so transferred to another as to become its native characteristic. Mr. Hall had a buoyancy and playfulness, when among his select friends, which were remarkably captivating. Among strangers there was a reserve for a short time; but it was soon shaken off, especially if he found that they were pious or intelligent. The presence of a man who gave himself airs of condescension usually induced him to remain silent or to retire. He could enjoy the society of men of moderate information; and it was interesting to observe how, by a few apt questions, he would ascertain in what direction their pursuits lay, and then so draw them out as to give them the pleasure of feeling that they were contributing to *his* stock of that knowledge which they could not but think useful. He was eminently alive to the emotions of pity; an affection always calculated to inspire attachment, but which in a man of abstract habits is, I fear, very unusual. He was generous by nature, as well as upon principle, and in seasons of affliction would remarkably identify himself with those who most needed sympathy. He rather avoided than sought expressions of thankfulness; and sometimes, when he became oppressed by them, would hastily say, "Thank you, thank "you; you have said more than enough: remember, God has "sent into the world a more powerful and more noble senti- "ment than even gratitude."

For some years, he made it a rule to pay a pastoral visit to every member of his church once each quarter. He did the same also with regard to such of his ordinary hearers as he thought willing to receive him as a minister of religion. These were not calls, but *visits*, and usually paid on evenings,

that he might meet the whole assembled family. Among the lower classes, to make them quite at their ease, he would sit down with them at supper; and, that this might involve them in no extra expense, he took care they should all know that he preferred a bason of milk.

He persuaded the poorer members of his church to form little meetings, for reading, religious conversation, and prayer, going "from house to house." These were held once a fortnight, I think, in the summer time; once a week during the winter. He made it a point of official duty to attend them frequently; and regarded them, with the weekly meetings in the vestry, as the best thermometer for ascertaining the religious state of his people.

In him all was at the utmost remove from gloom or moroseness. Even the raillery in which he indulged showed his good nature, and was exceedingly playful; and, notwithstanding the avowed and lamented impetuosity in argument to which he was prone, nothing, so far as I ever saw, but conceit, engrafted upon stupidity, provoked his impatience, and called forth a severity which he scarcely knew how to restrain.* With regard to disposition, the predominant features were kindness and cheerfulness. He never deliberately gave pain to any one, except in those few extreme cases where there appeared a moral necessity of "rebuking sharply" for the good of the offender. His kindness to children, to servants, to the indigent, nay, to animals, was uniformly

* The following is an instance of his manner of checking inordinate vanity. A preacher of this character having delivered a sermon in Mr. Hall's hearing, pressed him, with a disgusting union of self-complacency and indelicacy, to state what he thought of the sermon. Mr. Hall remained silent for some time, hoping that his silence would be rightly interpreted; but this only caused the question to be pressed with greater earnestness. Mr. Hall at length said, "There was one very fine passage, sir." "I am rejoiced to hear you say so. Pray, sir, which was it?" "Why, sir, it was the passage from the pulpit into the vestry."

manifest. And such was his prevailing cheerfulness, that he seemed to move and breathe in an atmosphere of hilarity; which, indeed, his countenance always indicated, except when the pain in his back affected his spirits, and caused his imagination to dwell upon the evils of Cambridgeshire scenery.

This was, in his case, far from a hypothetical grievance. It seriously diminished his happiness at Cambridge, and at length was the main cause of his quitting it. In one of my early interviews with him, before I had been a month at that place, he said to me, "What do you think of Cambridge, sir?" "It is a very interesting place." "Yes, the place where "Bacon, and Barrow, and Newton studied, and where Jeremy "Taylor was born, cannot but be *interesting*. But that is "not what I mean;—what do you say to the scenery, sir?" "Some of the public buildings are very striking, and the "college walks very pleasing; but"—and there I hesitated. He immediately added: "But there is nothing else to be said. "What do you think of the surrounding country, sir? Does "not it strike you as very insipid?" "No, not precisely so." "Ay, ay; I had forgotten: you come from a flat country. "Yet you *must* love hills: there are no hills here." I replied, "Yes, there are; there are Madingley Hill, and the "Castle Hill, and Gogmagog Hill." This amused him exceedingly; and he said, "Why, as to Madingley, there is "something in that; it reminds you of the Cottons, and the "Cottonian Library: but that is not because Madingley is a "high hill, but because Sir Robert Cotton was a great man; "and even he was not born *there*. Then, as to your second "example, do you know that the Castle Hill is the place of "the public executions? That is no very pleasant associa-"tion, sir. And as to your last example, Gogmagog Hill is "five miles off; and many who go there are puzzled to say "whether it is natural or artificial. 'T is a dismally flat

"country, sir; dismally flat.* Ely is twelve miles distant, "but the road from Cambridge thither scarcely deviates "twelve inches from the same level, and *that's* not very in- "teresting. Before I came to Cambridge, I had read in the "prize poems, and in some other works of fancy, of 'the "banks of the Cam,' of 'the sweetly flowing stream,' and "so on; but when I arrived here I was sadly disappointed. "When I first saw the river as I passed over King's College "Bridge, I could not help exclaiming, Why, the stream is "standing still to see people drown themselves! and that, I "am sorry to say, is a permanent feeling with me." I ques- tioned the correctness of this impression; but he immediately rejoined: "Shocking place for the spirits, sir! I wish you "may not find it so: it must be the very focus of suicides. "Were you ever at Bristol, sir? There is scenery, scenery "worth looking upon, and worth thinking of; and so there "is even at Aberdeen, with all its surrounding barrenness. "The trees on the banks of the Don are as fine as those on "the banks of the Cam: and the river is alive, sir; it falls "over precipices, and foams and dashes, so as to invigorate "and inspire those who witness it. The Don is *a river*, sir, "and the Severn is *a river;* but not even a poet would so

* On Mr. Hall's last visit to Cambridge, one of his friends took him out for a morning's ride, and showed him the improvements as to culti- vation, by means of new enclosures, &c. "True," said he; "but still "there is that odious flatness, that insipid sameness of scenery all around." Then, with a tone of great seriousness, he added, "I always say of my "Cambridge friends, when I witness their contentedness in such a country, "'Herein is the faith and patience of the saints!' *My* faith and patience "could not sustain me under it, with the unvarying kindness of my friends "in addition."

On another morning ride, his companion said, "Look at these fields, "with the crops of corn so smooth and so abundant; are not *they* pleasant? "And do they not excite the idea of plenty?" He rejoined, with his usual promptness, "Oh, yes! and so does a large meal-tub, filled to the "brim. But I was not thinking of *plenty*, but of *beauty*."

" designate *the Cam*, unless by an obvious figure he termed it " the *sleeping* river."

At that period, though he was strong and active, he often suffered extremely from the pain to which I have before adverted, and which was his sad companion through life. On entering his room, I could at once tell whether or not his night had been refreshing; for, if it had, I found him at the table, the books to be studied ready, and a vacant chair set for me. If his night had been restless, and the pain still continued, I found him lying on the sofa, or more frequently upon three chairs, on which he could obtain an easier position. At such seasons scarcely ever did a complaint issue from his lips; but inviting me to take the sofa, our reading commenced. They, however, who knew Mr. Hall, can conjecture how often, if he became interested, he would raise himself from his chairs, utter a few animated expressions, and then resume the favourite reclining posture. Sometimes, when he was suffering more than usual, he proposed a walk in the fields, where, with the appropriate book as our companion, we could pursue the subject. If *he* was the preceptor, as was commonly the case in these peripatetic lectures, he soon lost the sense of pain, and nearly as soon escaped from our author, whoever he might be, and expatiated at large upon some train of inquiry or explication which our course of reading had suggested. As his thoughts enkindled, both his steps and his words became quicker, until, ere long, it was difficult to say whether the body or the mind were brought most upon the stretch in keeping up with him. This peculiarity I have noticed in a few other men of vigorous intellect and lively imagination.

Still farther to illustrate Mr. Hall's character, his turn of thought and expression, I will now bring together a few such incidents and short remarks, occurring between 1796 and 1803, as present themselves most vividly to my mind.

It will already have appeared that benevolence was a prevailing characteristic. When he had aided a poor man to the full extent of his own pecuniary means, he would sometimes apply to one of his affluent friends: "Poor —— is in great "distress; some of his family are ill, and he cannot supply "proper necessaries. Lend me five shillings for the poor "fellow. I will pay you again in a fortnight, unless in the "mean time you find that the case deserves your help, and "then the donation shall become yours."

His disapprobation of avarice bore a natural relation to his own benevolence. Being informed that a rich man in the neighbourhood, who was by no means celebrated for his liberality, had attended to a tale of distress without relieving it, he said: "Yes, yes; he would listen, but without inclining "his head. He may lend a distant ear to the murmurings "from the vale beneath, but he remains like a mountain "covered with perpetual snow."

On another occasion, a person talking to him of one whom they both knew, and who was very penurious, said: "Poor "wretch! you might put his soul into a nut-shell." "Yes, "sir," Mr. Hall replied, "and even then it would creep out "at a maggot-hole."

His love of sincerity in words and actions was constantly apparent. Once, while he was spending an evening at the house of a friend, a lady who was there on a visit retired, that her little girl of four years old might go to bed. She returned in about half an hour, and said to a lady near her, "She is gone to sleep. I put on my night-cap, and lay down "by her, and she soon dropped off." Mr. Hall, who overheard this, said, "Excuse me, madam; do you wish your "child to grow up a liar?" "O dear, no, sir! I should be "shocked at such a thing." "Then bear with me while I "say you must never *act* a lie before her. Children are very

"quick observers, and soon learn that that which assumes to "be what it is not is a lie, whether acted or spoken." This was uttered with a kindness which precluded offence, yet with a seriousness that could not be forgotten.

His dislike to compliments was thus expressed:—"In com- "pliments two and two *do not* make four; and twenty and "twenty fall very far short of forty. Deal not, then, in that "deceitful arithmetic."

It was said in Mr. Hall's hearing, that "compliments were "pleasing truths, and flatteries pleasing untruths." He remarked: "Neither of them are *pleasing* to a man of reflec- "tion, for the falsehoods in this case so nearly assume the "semblance of truth, that one is perplexed to tell which is "actually given; and no man is pleased with perplexity."

"You remember Mr. ———, sir?" "Yes, very well." "Were you aware of his fondness for brandy-and-water?" "No." "It was a sad habit; but it grew out of his love of "story-telling; and that also is a bad habit, a very bad habit, "for a minister of the Gospel. As he grew old, his animal "spirits flagged, and his stories became defective in vivacity: "he therefore took to brandy-and-water; weak enough, it is "true, at first, but soon nearly 'half-and-half.' Ere long he "indulged the habit in a morning; and when he came to "Cambridge he would call upon me, and before he had been "with me five minutes, ask for a little brandy-and-water, "which was, of course, to give him artificial spirits to render "him agreeable in his visits to others. I felt great difficulty, "for he, you know, sir, was much older than I was; yet, "being persuaded that the ruin of his character, if not of his "peace, was inevitable, unless something was done, I resolved "upon one strong effort for his rescue. So the next time that "he called, and, as usual, said, 'Friend Hall, I will thank "you for a glass of brandy-and-water,' I replied, 'Call things

" by their right names, and you shall have as much as you " please.' 'Why, don't I employ the right name? I ask " for a glass of brandy-and-water.' 'That is the current, " but not the appropriate name: ask for *a glass of liquid fire* " *and distilled damnation*, and you shall have a gallon.' " Poor man! he turned pale, and for a moment seemed " struggling with anger. But, knowing that I did not mean " to insult him, he stretched out his hand, and said, 'Brother " Hall, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.' From " that time he ceased to take brandy-and-water."

In one of my early interviews with Mr. Hall, I used the word felicity three or four times in rather quick succession. He asked: "Why do you say felicity, sir? Happiness is a " better word, more musical and genuine English, coming " from the Saxon." "Not more musical, I think, sir." " Yes, more musical; and so are words derived from the " Saxon generally. Listen, sir: 'My heart is smitten, and " withered like grass;' there's plaintive music. Listen again, " sir: 'Under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;' there's " cheerful music." "Yes; but *rejoice* is French." "True, " but all the rest is Saxon, and rejoice is almost out of tune " with the other words. Listen again: 'Thou hast delivered " my eyes from tears, my soul from death, and my feet from " falling;' all Saxon, sir, except *delivered*. I could think of " the word *tear*, sir, till I wept. Then again, for another " noble specimen, and almost all good old Saxon-English: " 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of " my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'"

Shortly after this I was reading the original edition of Doddridge's Pneumatology, and asked Mr. Hall to lend me Kippis's edition, in which the references to other authorities, on the various topics discussed, are greatly increased. He told me that he did not possess Kippis's edition, in a tone

which *then* surprised me a little, as it showed that he did not highly estimate Kippis's authority. I therefore asked, "Was "not Dr. Kippis a clever man?" "He might be a very clever "man by nature, for aught I know, but he laid so many books "upon his head that his brains could not move." This was to me, who at that period devoted much more time to reading than to thinking, an admirable lesson.

On being asked whether he was an Arminian or a Calvinist, he said—"Neither, sir, but I believe I recede farther from "Arminianism than from Calvinism. If a man profess him- "self a decided Arminian, I infer from it that he is not a "good logician; but, sir, it does not interfere with his personal "piety: look at good Mr. Benson, for example. I regard the "question more as metaphysical than religious."

A lady who had been speaking of the Supreme Being with great familiarity, but in religious phraseology, having retired, he said—"I wish I knew how to cure that good lady of her "bad habit. I have tried, but as yet, in vain. It is a great "mistake to affect this kind of familiarity with the King of "kings, and speak of him as though he were a next-door "neighbour, from the pretence of love. Mr. Boyle's well- "known habit was infinitely to be commended. And one of "our old divines, I forget which, well remarks that—'No- "thing but ignorance can be guilty of this boldness; that "there is no divinity but in a humble fear, no philosophy but "shows itself in silent admiration.'"

When two or three gentlemen were discussing the question, whether a man of no religion can be a successful minister of the Gospel, surprise was expressed that Mr. Hall remained silent—"Sir (said he, in reply), I would not deny that a "sermon from a bad man may sometimes do good; but the "general question does not admit of an argument. Is it at "all probable, that one who is a willing servant of Satan,

" (and that, you know, sir, is the hypothesis you assume), " will fight *against* him with all his might; and if not, what " *success* can be rationally expected?"

Mr. Hall did not permit his sedulous cultivation of the mind to draw him aside from the cultivation of the heart. The evidences were, indeed, very strong, that his preparation for ministerial duty was devotional as well as intellectual. Thus, his public services, by a striking gradation, for months and years, evinced an obvious growth in mental power, in literary acquisition, and in the seriousness, affection, and ardour of a man of piety. His usefulness and his popularity increased; the church and congregation became considerably augmented; and in 1798 it was found necessary to enlarge the place of worship to accommodate about two hundred more persons.

Early in the year 1799, a severe fever, which brought him, in his own apprehension and that of his friends, to the brink of the grave, gave him an opportunity of experiencing the support yielded by the doctrines of the Cross " in the near " views of death and judgment." He " never before felt his " mind so calm and happy." The impression was not only salutary, but abiding; and it again prompted him to the investigation of one or two points, with regard to which he had long felt himself floating in uncertainty. Although he had for some years steadily and earnestly enforced the necessity of divine influence in the transformation of character, and in perseverance in a course of consistent, holy obedience, yet he spoke of it as " the influence of the spirit of God," and never in express terms as " the influence of the Holy Spirit." The reason was, that though he fully believed the necessity of spiritual agency in commencing and continuing the spiritual life, he doubted the doctrine of the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. But about this time he was struck with the fact that,

whenever in private prayer he was in the most deeply devotional frame, "most overwhelmed with the sense that he was "nothing, and God was all in all," he always felt himself inclined to adopt a trinitarian doxology. This circumstance, occurring frequently, and more frequently meditated upon in a tone of honest and anxious inquiry, issued at length in a persuasion that the Holy Spirit is really and truly God, and not an emanation. It was not, however, until 1800 that he publicly included the personality of the Holy Spirit in his statements of the doctrine of spiritual influence.

In attempting to give some idea of the general character and style of Mr. Hall's public services, while I had the privilege of hearing him at Cambridge, I feel that I shall neither adequately describe what his preaching really was, nor even do justice to my own conceptions of it.

His manner of reading the Scriptures at the beginning of the service was not generally interesting; nor did the portion read always bear an obvious reference to the text or subject afterwards brought forward. But when passages of Scripture were quoted in the sermon, they were so delivered as to give to their true meaning the most intelligible prominence and force.

His prayers were remarkable for their simplicity and their devotional feeling. No person could listen to them without being persuaded that he who uttered them was really engaged in prayer, was holding communion with his God and Father in Christ Jesus. His tones and his countenance throughout these exercises were those of one most deeply imbued with a sense of his unworthiness, and throwing himself at the feet of the Great Eternal, conscious that he could present no claim for a single blessing but the blood of atonement, yet animated by the cheering hope that the voice of that blood would prevail. The structure of these prayers never indicated any

preconceived plan. They were the general effusions of a truly devotional spirit, animated by a vivid recollection of what in his own state, in that of the congregation, of the town and vicinity, needed most ardently to be laid before the Father of Mercies. Thus they were remarkably comprehensive, and furnished a far greater variety on the successive occasions of public worship, than those of any other minister whom I have ever known. The portions which were devoted to intercession operated most happily in drawing the affections of his people towards himself; since they showed how completely his Christian sympathy had prepared him to make their respective cases his own.

The commencement of his sermons did not excite much expectation in strangers, except they were such as recollected how the mental agitation, produced by diffidence, characterised the first sentences of some of the orators of antiquity. He began with hesitation, and often in a very low and feeble tone, coughing frequently, as though he were oppressed by asthmatic obstructions. As he proceeded his manner became easy, graceful, and at length highly impassioned; his voice also acquired more flexibility, body, and sweetness, and in all his happier and more successful efforts swelled into a stream of the most touching and impressive melody. The farther he advanced, the more spontaneous, natural, and free from labour seemed the progression of thought. He announced the results of the most extensive reading, of the most patient investigation, or of the profoundest thinking, with such unassuming simplicity, yet set them in such a position of obvious and lucid reality, that the auditors wondered how things so simple and manifest should have escaped them. Throughout his sermons he kept his subject thoroughly in view, and so incessantly brought forward new arguments, or new illustrations, to confirm or to explain it, that with him amplification was almost invariably accumulative in its tendency One

thought was succeeded by another, and that by another, and another, each more weighty than the preceding, each more calculated to deepen and render permanent the ultimate impression. He could at pleasure adopt the unadorned, the ornamental, or the energetic; and indeed combine them in every diversity of modulation. In his higher flights, what he said of Burke might, with the slightest deduction, be applied to himself, "that his imperial fancy laid all nature under tri-" bute, and collected riches from every scene of the creation, "and every walk of art;" and at the same time, that could be affirmed of Mr. Hall which could *not* be affirmed of Mr. Burke, that he never fatigued and oppressed by gaudy and superfluous imagery. Whenever the subject obviously justified it, he would yield the reins to an eloquence more diffusive and magnificent than the ordinary course of pulpit instruction seemed to require: yet so exquisite was his perception of beauty, and so sound his judgment, that not the coldest taste, provided it were real taste, could ever wish an image omitted which Mr. Hall had introduced. His inexhaustible variety augmented the general effect. The same images, the same illustrations, scarcely ever recurred. So ample were his stores, that repetition of every kind was usually avoided; while in his illustrations he would connect and contrast what was disjointed and opposed, or distinctly unfold what was abstracted or obscure, in such terms as were generally intelligible, not only to the well-informed but to the meanest capacity. As he advanced to his practical applications all his mental powers were shown in the most palpable but finely-balanced exercise. His mind would, if I may so speak, collect itself and come forth with a luminous activity, proving as he advanced, how vast, and, in some important senses, how next to irresistible those powers were. In such seasons his preaching communicated universal animation: his congregation would seem to partake of his spirit, to think and feel as he did,

to be fully influenced by the presence of the objects which he had placed before them, fully actuated by the motives which he had enforced with such energy and pathos.

All was doubtless heightened by his singular rapidity of utterance,—by the rhythmical structure of his sentences, calculated at once for the transmission of the most momentous truths, for the powers of his voice, and for the convenience of breathing freely at measured intervals,—and more than all, by the unequivocal earnestness and sincerity which pervaded the whole, and by the eloquence of his most speaking countenance and penetrating eye. In his sublimer strains, not only was every faculty of the soul enkindled and in entire operation, but his very features seemed fully to sympathise with the spirit, and to give out, nay, to *throw* out, thought, and sentiment, and feeling.

From the commencement of his discourse an almost breathless silence prevailed, deeply impressive and solemnizing from its singular intenseness. Not a sound was heard but that of the preacher's voice—scarcely an eye but was fixed upon him —not a countenance that he did not watch, and read, and interpret, as he surveyed them again and again with his rapid, ever-excursive glance. As he advanced and increased in animation, five or six of the auditors would be seen to rise and lean forward over the front of their pews, still keeping their eyes upon him. Some new or striking sentiment or expression would, in a few minutes, cause others to rise in like manner: shortly afterwards still more, and so on, until, long before the close of the sermon, it often happened that a considerable portion of the congregation were seen standing,—every eye directed to the preacher, yet now and then for a moment glancing from one to the other, thus transmitting and reciprocating thought and feeling:—Mr. Hall himself, though manifestly absorbed in his subject, conscious of the whole, receiving new animation from what he thus witnessed, reflect-

ing it back upon those who were already alive to the inspiration, until all that were susceptible of thought and emotion seemed wound up to the utmost limit of elevation *on earth*,—when he would close, and they reluctantly and slowly resume their seats.

It would be highly instructive and gratifying to know by what process so finished a preacher, so exquisite and tasteful a writer, as Mr. Hall, prepared his respective compositions for the pulpit and the press. But the reluctance with which he spoke either of himself or of his occupations deprives us of much of this desirable information. At the time when our intercourse was most frequent and unrestrained, I have often been with him while he was preparing for the pulpit, and have occasionally ventured to ask him a few questions; his answers, always frank and elucidatory, however concise, enabled me, by means also of frequent reference to his notes on different sermons which I had heard delivered, to form tolerably satisfactory conjectures as to the course pursued. He then stated, as he since has to different friends, that he never proceeded even to think of adopting a specific text, as fitted for a sermon, until the matter it presented stood out in the form of a particular, distinct, and precise topic; he could then take it up and lay it down as he pleased. He possessed an extraordinary power of abstraction. By its means he could, at pleasure, insulate, nay, in a manner enclose himself, from every thing around him; and thus pursue his mental operations. It was usual with him to have five or six subjects under simultaneous training; to either of which he could direct his attention as inclination or necessity required. The grand divisions of thought, the heads of a sermon, for example, he would trace out with the most prominent lines of demarcation; and these for some years supplied all the hints that he needed to the pulpit, except on extraordinary occasions. To these grand divisions he referred, and upon them suspended all the

subordinate trains of thought. The latter, again, appear to have been of two classes, altogether distinct; outline trains of thought, and trains into which much of the detail was interwoven. In the outline train, the whole plan was carried out and completed as to the argument: in that of detail, the illustrations, images, and subordinate proofs were selected and classified; and in those instances where the force of an argument, or the probable success of a general application, would mainly depend upon the language, even that was selected and appropriated, sometimes to the precise collocation of the words. Of some sermons, no portions whatever were wrought out thus minutely; the language employed in preaching being that which spontaneously occurred at the time: of others, this minute attention was paid to the verbal structure of nearly half: of *a few*, the entire train of preparation, almost from the beginning to the end, extended to the very sentences. Yet the marked peculiarity consisted in this, that the process, even when thus directed to minutiæ in his more elaborate efforts, did not require the use of the pen; at least at the time to which these remarks principally apply. For Mr. Hall had a singular faculty for continuous mental composition, apart from the aid which writing supplies. Words were so disciplined to his use, that the more he thought on any subject, the more closely were the topics of thought associated with appropriate terms and phrases; and it was manifest that he had carefully disciplined his mind to this as an independent exercise, probably to avoid the pain and fatigue which always attended the process of writing. Whenever he pleased he could thus pursue the consecution to a great extent, in sentences, many of them perfectly formed and elaborately finished, as he went along, and easily called up again by memory, as occasion required; not, however, in their separate character, as elements of language, but because of their being fully worked into the substance of thought.

It hence happened that the excellence which other persons often attain as to style, from the use of the pen, in written, visible composition (employing the eye upon words, instead of fixing the memory upon substantial mental product, and, it may be, diminishing the intellectual power by substituting for one of its faculties a mechanical result), he more successfully and uniformly attained by a purely meditative process.

In preparing for the press the process was in many respects essentially different. There was, from the outset, a struggle to overcome the reluctance to write, arising from the anticipation of increased pain, which he knew *must* be endured so long as he was engaged in the mechanical act; and at every return to the labour he had a new reluctance to surmount. There was, moreover, the constant effort to restrain a mind naturally active, ardent, and rapid in all its movements, to a slow progression; nay, a farther effort, and to a mind so constituted a very irksome one, to bring the thoughts back from the ultimate issue to which they were incessantly hastening, and cause them to pass and repass, again and again, by a comparatively sluggish course, the successive links in a long chain. Nor was this all. He had formed for himself, as a writer, an ideal standard of excellence, which could not be reached: his perception of beauty in composition was so delicate and refined, that in regard to his own productions it engendered perhaps a fastidious taste; and, deep and prevailing as was his humility, he was not insensible to the value of a high reputation, and therefore cautiously guarded against the risk of diminishing his usefulness among certain classes of readers, by consigning any production to the world that had not been thoroughly subjected to the *labor limæ*. Hence the extreme slowness with which he composed for the press; writing, improving, rejecting the improvement; seeking another; rejecting it; recasting whole sentences and pages; often recurring precisely to the original phraseology; and

still oftener repenting, when it was too late, that he had not done so. All this he lamented as a serious defect, declaring that it gave, in his own view, to his written compositions an air of stiffness and formality, which deprived him of all complacency in them. And I cannot but think that, notwithstanding the exquisite harmony and beauty which characterize every thing that he has published, they were, even in point of felicity of diction, and the majestic current and force of language, inferior to the "winged words" that escaped from his lips, when "his soul was enlarged" in the discharge of ministerial duty.

In the beginning of the year 1799, Mr. Hall had the happiness of renewing personal intercourse with his early friend. Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, being about to deliver a course of Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, deemed it expedient, for the completion of some of the extensive researches which that important undertaking required, to reside for a few months at Cambridge, that he might consult the more valuable of the college libraries, as well as the public library belonging to the University generally. Another distinguished individual, the late Dr. Samuel Parr, spent several weeks at Cambridge at the same time, for the purpose of visiting some of his old friends, of associating with Mr. Mackintosh, and of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Hall, whose character he had long known and highly valued. Mr. Hall, pleased to refresh his spirits in the society of his beloved fellow-student, and by no means unwilling to glean something from the stores of so profound a scholar as Dr. Parr, often spent his evenings with these two eminent men, and a few members of the University, who were invited to their select parties, and with whom, from that time, he cultivated an intimacy.

This circumstance led to the formation of Mr. Hall's most inveterate habit—that of smoking. Previously to this period

he had always censured the practice in the strongest terms; but, on associating with Dr. Parr, his aversion to what he used to denominate "an odious custom" soon passed away. The Doctor was always enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke, from sunrise until midnight; and no person could remain in his company long without great inconvenience, unless he learnt to smoke in self-defence. Mr. Hall, therefore, made the attempt, and quickly overcame every obstacle. I well recollect entering his apartment just as he had acquired this happy art; and, seeing him sit at ease, the smoke rising above his head in lurid, spiral volumes, he inhaling and apparently enjoying its fragrance, I could not suppress my astonishment. "O sir (said he), I am only qualifying my-"self for the society of a Doctor of Divinity; and this "(holding up the pipe) is my test of admission."

Mr. Hall's Cambridge friends were divided in their feelings and wishes with regard to this new practice. The majority approved it, from a belief that the narcotic influence of tobacco would mitigate the pain which he had so long endured. Others, apprehending that his habit of converting *every thing* into a source of enjoyment would transform him into an unremitting smoker, and that injury to his health would ensue, ventured to expostulate with him. I belonged to the latter class, and put into his hands Dr. Adam Clarke's pamphlet on 'The Use and Abuse of Tobacco,' with a request that he would read it. In a few days he returned it, and at once, as if to preclude discussion, said, "Thank you, "sir, for Adam Clarke's pamphlet. I can't refute his argu-"ments, and I can't give up smoking."

We now approach the time when Mr. Hall acquired a signal extension of celebrity. Many who had hailed the French Revolution of 1789 as an event productive of extensive benefit were compelled to admit, after a few years, that the great leaders in that Revolution, and still more their

followers, committed grievous blunders, and grosser crimes, from the want of higher than political principles to control their actions. Yet, in the false security which some felt, and others insidiously aimed to inspire, it was suspected by but few, that much of our periodical literature had, under the plea of encouraging free discussion, become irreligious in its tendency, and that various unprincipled demagogues in London and the large manufacturing towns not only held up to admiration the conduct of the detestable actors in "the Reign of Terror," but were constantly exerting themselves to disseminate democracy and atheism conjointly. Such, however, was the fact. From 1795 to 1799, debating rooms were opened in various parts of the metropolis, in which the most barefaced infidelity was taught, and to which the lower classes were invited, often on Sunday evenings, by a variety of specious allurements. Mr. Hall was no sooner aware of the existence of these sources of evil, and of the mischief they produced, than he began to use the voice of warning, in his private intercourse among his people, and to impress upon such of the young as he feared had received a sceptical bias, that of all fanaticism the fanaticism of infidelity then prevalent was at once the most preposterous and the most destructive.

Mr. Hall's persuasion of the continuance and growth of this infidel spirit induced him to preach and publish his celebrated sermon on 'Modern Infidelity;' which was not therefore, as many affirmed, a hasty production, written under excited feelings and false alarms, but the deliberate result of a confirmed belief, that the most strenuous efforts were required to repel mischief so awfully and insidiously diffused.

Before the publication of this sermon, its author had fully "counted the cost" as to the obloquy which it would bring upon him from various quarters; but he did not at all anticipate its extraordinary success, and the corresponding extension of his reputation. As repeated editions were called for, he

yielded his assent with great hesitation, from a fear that the copies would remain unsold; and he was the last to see, what every one else perceived, that it had carried his celebrity as a profound thinker and eloquent writer far beyond the limits of the denomination to which he was so bright an ornament. From that time Mr. Hall's reputation was placed upon an eminence which it will probably retain so long as purity and elevation of style, deeply philosophical views of the springs and motives of action, and correct theological sentiments, are duly appreciated in the world.

Many of the members of the University of Cambridge, including not merely under-graduates, but college fellows and tutors, were often seen at the Baptist place of worship. These sometimes amounted to fifty or sixty; and a few of them attended so constantly upon the afternoon services, that they became almost regarded as regular hearers. Among the latter, some have since become distinguished men, and occupy important stations either in the church or in the public service, as statesmen or senators.

The attendance of so many university students upon the services of a dissenting minister, at length began to excite alarm among the "Heads of Houses;" of whom a meeting was summoned to consider the expediency of interposing some authoritative measure to prevent this irregularity. But Dr. Mansel, then master of the largest college, Trinity, and afterwards Bishop of Bristol, "declared that he could not be a "party in such a measure: he admired and revered Mr. Hall, "both for his talents and for his genuine liberality; he had "ascertained that his preaching was not that of a partisan, but "of an enlightened minister of Christ; and that therefore if he "were not the Master of Trinity he should certainly often at- "tend himself; and that even now he had experienced a severe "struggle before he could make up his mind to relinquish so "great a benefit." Shortly after this he personally thanked

Mr. Hall, not only for his sermon, but for his general efforts in the Christian cause; and, through the medium of a common friend, endeavoured to induce him to enter the Established Church. This, I believe, was the only *direct* attempt to persuade Mr. Hall to conform.

In little more than two years after the publication of the sermon on Modern Infidelity, Mr. Hall again appeared before the public as an author. The transient peace of Amiens was celebrated by a general thanksgiving throughout England on the 1st of June, 1802. In the sermon preached by Mr. Hall on that occasion, he endeavoured first to awaken the gratitude of his auditors by a most touching picture of the horrors of war, from which Europe had just escaped; and then to apply the gratitude so excited to acts of benevolence.

The nation had scarcely tasted the blessings of peace, when a dispute on one of the articles of the treaty of Amiens involved us in a fresh war with the French. Bonaparte, then First Consul, aware of the British ascendancy at sea, resolved first to attack our continental dominions. He also seized on the persons and property of the numerous English who had visited France during the brief interval of peace, detaining them as prisoners of war; and then menaced this country with invasion. So strange, and in some respects so atrocious, a commencement of hostilities, had a singular effect in melting down dissension, and diffusing a spirit of almost unexampled unanimity among all classes and ranks of the community. To adopt Mr. Hall's emphatic language: "It was a struggle "for existence, not for empire. It must surely be regarded "as a happy circumstance that the contest did not take this "shape at an earlier period, while many were deceived by "certain specious pretences of liberty into a favourable opinion "of our enemy's designs. The popular delusion had passed; "the most unexampled prodigies of guilt had dispelled it; "and, after a series of rapine and cruelty, *had torn from*

"*every heart the last fibres of mistaken partiality.*"* At this momentous period Mr. Hall's love of his country was again signally evinced. On the fast-day, 19th October, 1803, he preached at Bristol, where he was then on a visit, a sermon afterwards published—'The Sentiments proper to the Present Crisis,' which had the happiest effect in enkindling the flame of generous, active patriotism. This sermon perhaps excited more general admiration than any of the author's former productions; on account of its masterly exposure of prevailing errors, its original and philosophical defence of some momentous truths, and its remarkable appropriateness to the exigencies of the crisis. The last ten pages were thought by many (and by Mr. Pitt among the number) to be fully equal in genuine eloquence to any passage of the same length that can be selected from either ancient or modern orators.

During the early months of the year 1803 the pain in Mr. Hall's back increased, both in intenseness and continuity, depriving him almost always of refreshing sleep, and depressing his spirits to an unusual degree. On one of his visits to Kettering, and its neighbourhood, he consulted Dr. Kerr, of Northampton, who recommended him to reside a few miles from Cambridge, and to have recourse to horse exercise. In consequence of this advice, he took a house at Shelford, a village about five miles from Cambridge; and the frequent and short journeys on horseback which thus became necessary for a season, seemed beneficial. Yet the advantage was not of long continuance. He missed his delightful evenings spent in the society of the intelligent classes of the congregation (of whom there was a much higher proportion than in most congregations), and he missed still more the simple, heart-refreshing remarks of the poor of his flock, whose pious converse had always been peculiarly soothing to his mind. It is true he there enjoyed intercourse with two excellent men,

* See pp. 366, 367.

both of whom he cordially esteemed, Mr. James Nutter, a valuable member of his church at Cambridge, and the Rev. Thomas Thomason, afterwards one of the East India Company's chaplains at Calcutta. Gratifying, however, as this intercourse was, both to Mr. Hall and his valued neighbours, it still left him too much alone, and too much exposed to all the morbid influences of a disordered body, and of a mind overstrained. Often has he been known to sit close at his reading, or yet more intensely engaged in abstract thought, for more than twelve hours in the day; so that, when one or both of his kind friends have called upon him, in the hope of drawing him from his solitude, they have found him in such a state of nervous excitement as led them to unite their efforts in persuading him to take some mild narcotic, and retire to rest. The painful result may be anticipated. This noble mind lost its equilibrium; and he who had so long been the theme of universal admiration, now became the subject of as extensive a sympathy. This event occurred in November, 1804. Mr. Hall was placed under the care of Dr. Arnold, of Leicester, whose attention, with the blessing of God, in about two months, restored him both to mental and bodily health.

During this afflictive suspension of his pastoral duties, his church and congregation gave the most unequivocal proofs that they had caught somewhat of his generous and exalted spirit, and that they were desirous to conduce to his welfare in temporal things, in acknowledgment of the spiritual blessings he had been the means of conveying to them. They set on foot a subscription, to which themselves contributed most liberally, and which, by the aid of other friends, became sufficient to produce, besides a life-annuity of one hundred pounds, a further sum nearly equal, vested in government securities, the latter to be at his own disposal at death: each sum being properly vested in trustees.

In April, 1805, he resumed his ministerial functions at Cambridge: but, it being deemed inexpedient for him to re-occupy his house at Shelford, he engaged another at Foulmire, about nine miles from Cambridge. This spot, doubtless, was unwisely selected; as his opportunities of social intercourse with old and intimate friends were almost entirely cut off, and he was thus left to feed more upon his own thoughts than in any preceding part of his life. Here the evils resulting from solitude, and a return of his old pain with more than its usual severity, ere long began to show themselves. Sleepless nights, habitual exclusion from society, a complete self-absorption, and the incessant struggle between what was due to a church and congregation which had given such signal proofs of affection for him, and what he felt to be necessary for his own preservation, a speedy removal from air and scenery that more and more impaired his health and oppressed his spirits; these, at about twelve months after his former attack at Shelford, produced a recurrence of the same malady, which again laid him aside from public duty.

He soon, however, recovered the complete balance of his mental powers, under the judicious care of the late Dr. Cox, of Fish Ponds, near Bristol. It was regarded as essential to the permanent possession of mental health and vigour, that he should resign the pastoral office at Cambridge; that he should, for a year at least, seek retirement in a spot selected and cordially approved by himself, abstain from preaching, and, as far as possible, avoid all strong excitement. Thus terminated a connexion which had subsisted for fifteen years, and had been of great benefit to Mr. Hall's character; while, by the Divine blessing upon his labours, it had transformed a society that was rapidly sinking under the influence of cold or disputatious speculators, into a flourishing church and congregation, "bringing forth the fruits of righteousness," and shining in the lustre of a consistent Christian profession.

It is pleasing to remark that the attachment on both sides remained undiminished until Mr. Hall's death.

Two visitations of so humiliating a calamity within the compass of a year deeply affected Mr. Hall's mind. Happily, however, for himself and for the world, his spirits soon recovered their wonted tone; and the permanent impression on his character was exclusively religious. His own decided persuasion was that, however vivid his convictions of religious truth, and of the necessity of a consistent course of evan gelical obedience had formerly been, and however correct his doctrinal sentiments during the last four or five years, yet that he did not undergo a thorough transformation of character, a complete renewal of his heart and affections, until the first of these seizures. Be this as it may (and the wonderful revelations of "the great day" can alone remove the doubt), there can be no question that from this period he seemed more to live under the prevailing recollection of his entire dependence upon God, that his habits were more devotional than they had ever before been, his exercises more fervent and more elevated.

In a letter written to his friend, Mr. Phillips, of Clapham, after his recovery, he thus adverts to his afflictions:

"I cannot look back upon the events which have befallen me, without admiration and gratitude. I am a monument of the goodness and of the severity of God. My sufferings have been extreme, and the kindness of God, in interposing in my behalf, unspeakable. Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may retain an indelible sense of the mercies received, and that the inconceivable afflictions I have undergone may 'work for me the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' I am often afraid lest it should be with me as with the ancient Israelites, who, after they had sung the praises of God, 'soon forgot his works.' O! that a life so signally redeemed from destruction may be as signally employed in that which is alone the true end of life, the service of God. But my heart is 'like a deceitful bow,' continually prone to turn aside; so that nothing but the powerful impulse of divine grace can fix it in a right aim."

At this time, I believe, Mr. Hall, under the persuasion to

which I have just alluded, made a solemn dedication of himself to God, renewing the act annually on the recurrence of his birthday. One of these touching and impressive records, which has been found among his papers, will, I feel assured, be read with deep interest.

"An Act of solemn Dedication of myself to God.

"O Lord, thou that searchest the heart, and triest the reins of the children of men, be thou the witness of what I am now about, in the strength of thy grace, to attempt; that grace I humbly and earnestly implore, to give validity and effect to that act of solemn engagement of myself to thy service, on which I am about to enter. 'Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are none of them hid from thee.' 'I was born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me.' I am an apostate, guilty branch of an apostate, guilty root, and my life has been a series of rebellions and transgressions, in which I have walked 'according to the course of this world; according to the Prince of the power of the air, the *spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*.' How shall I confess my transgressions before thee; what numbers can reach, what words can adequately express them! '*My iniquities have increased over my head, and my transgressions have grown up unto Heaven*.' O Lord, I esteem it a wonderful mercy that I have not long since been cut off in the midst of my sins, and been sent to hell before I had an opportunity or a heart to repent. Being assured from the word of God of thy gracious and merciful nature, and of thy willingness to pardon and accept penitent believing sinners on the ground of the blood and righteousness of thine own adorable Son, 'who died, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God,' and that 'him that cometh to him he will in nowise cast out,' I do most humbly prostrate myself at the footstool of his cross, and through him enter into thy covenant. I disclaim all right

to myself from henceforth, to my soul, my body, my time, my health, my reputation, my talents, or anything that belongs to me. I confess myself to be the property of the glorious Redeemer, as one whom I humbly hope he has redeemed by his blood to be part of 'the first fruits of his creatures.'

"I do most cheerfully and cordially receive him in all his offices, as my Priest, my Prophet, and my King. I dedicate myself to him, to serve, love, and trust in him as my life and my salvation to my life's end.

"I renounce the Devil and all his works, the flesh, and the world, with heartfelt regret that I should have been enslaved by them so long. I do solemnly and deliberately take thee to be my full and satisfying good, and eternal portion in and through thine adorable Son the Redeemer, and by the assistance of the blessed Spirit of all grace, the third person in the triune God, whom I take to be my Sanctifier and Comforter to the end of time, and through a happy eternity, praying that the Holy Spirit may deign to take perpetual possession of my heart and fix his abode there.

"I do most solemnly devote and give up myself to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, agreeably to the terms of the Gospel covenant, and in humble expectation of the blessings it ascertains to sincere believers. I call thee to witness, O God! the truth and reality of this surrender of all I have, and all I am, to thee; and conscious of the unspeakable deceitfulness of my heart, I humbly and earnestly implore the influence of thy Spirit to enable me to stand steadfast in this covenant, as well as an interest in the blood of the Son, that I may be forgiven in those instances (alas! that such an idea should be possible) in which I may in any degree swerve from it.

"Done this [2d] day of May, 1809, seven o'clock in the evening, Leicester. "ROBERT HALL."

Mr. Hall, on his removal from Dr. Cox's, spent some months among his relatives and friends in Leicestershire. At Arnsby he retraced the scenes of his youth, often visited the grave-yard, which would naturally awaken many interesting recollections of his early life, and on these occasions he has more than once been seen kneeling at his father's grave engaged in earnest prayer. He afterwards resided for a time at Enderby, a pleasant and sequestered village, five miles from Leicester, where, by the united influence of calm retirement and gentle spontaneous occupation, he gradually regained his bodily health, with great mental tranquillity, and a renewed capacity for usefulness in the church.

His friends, Dr. Ryland and Mr. Fuller, persuaded of the benefits that would flow from drawing his attention to a specific object, requested him to investigate the critical peculiarities of some difficult texts in the New Testament, respecting which Dr. Marshman had asked the opinion of his friends in England. This judicious application directed his thoughts to some of his old and favourite inquiries, and produced the most salutary effects. From this he passed to other literary occupations, thence to closer biblical study; and, in due time, when his strength and self-possession were adequately restored to permit the exertion without injury, he returned to the delightful work of "proclaiming the good "tidings of peace."

He first preached in some of the villages around him; and then, occasionally, to a small congregation assembling at a chapel in Harvey Lane, Leicester, which had several years before been under the care of that eminent man, Dr. Carey, late of Serampore. The congregation had been diminishing for some years, and at this time did not exceed two hundred and fifty; the church consisted of seventy-six members. After having preached to them a few months, he accepted an invitation to become their stated pastor; and his ministerial

labours were soon followed by tokens of good. "The people," said he, in a letter to Dr. Ryland, "are a simple-hearted, "affectionate, praying people, to whom I preach with more "pleasure than to the more refined audience at Cambridge. "We have had, through mercy, some small addition, and "hope for more. Our meetings in general, our prayer meet- "ings in particular, are well attended."

With this church he continued connected nearly twenty years. The church and congregation steadily increased during that long interval, and scarcely any thing of moment occurred to interrupt their internal peace. The place of worship, which, when Mr. Hall first settled there, would not conveniently hold four hundred persons, was enlarged in 1809 for the reception of about eight hundred; and in 1817 a second enlargement rendered it capable of accommodating a thousand persons. In 1826, at the close of Mr. Hall's labours there, the place was comfortably filled, and the members of the church, besides those who it is believed had gone to their eternal reward, amounted to nearly three hundred. More than a hundred of those who constituted the evening congregation were pious members of the church of England.

In the autumn of 1807 Mr. Hall removed from Enderby to a house in Leicester, which he engaged partly that he might more conveniently associate with the people of his charge, and partly in anticipation of his marriage, which took place in March, 1808. This event gave great and sincere satisfaction to his old and intimate friends, most of whom had long regretted that one so evidently formed for domestic enjoyments should for so many years have lived without attaining them; and had no doubt, indeed, that an earlier marriage would, by checking his propensity to incessant retirement and mental abstraction, have preserved him from the heavy afflictions which had befallen him.

Mr. Hall's residence at Leicester was not only of longer

continuance than at any other place, but I doubt not that it was the period in which he was most happy, active, and useful. His domestic comfort at once contributed to a more uniform flow of spirits than he had for some time experienced, and greatly to the regularity of his habits. The increase both of attentive hearers, and of the number among them who were admitted to church-fellowship, supplied constant reason for encouragement and thankfulness.

Placed in the midst of an extensive sphere of benevolent and sacred influence, Mr. Hall was soon roused to a measure of activity and a diversity of employment to which he had hitherto been a stranger. The Bible Society at Leicester, Missionary Societies there and all around, asked and received his aid; and these, with the different public services of frequent occurrence among orthodox dissenters, gave occasion to the happiest exercise of his varied powers.

Nor were these efforts, and this high estimate of their value, confined to the field of activity he thus occupied. He had, on quitting Bristol in 1791, consented to spend a few weeks with his friends there, every two years. He had also made a similar arrangement for visiting Cambridge, where the members of his former congregation had peculiar claims upon him. Although his invariable dread of notoriety, and his dislike of the bustle of the metropolis, caused his visits there to be "few and far between," yet they occurred sufficiently often to excite almost universally the highest admiration of his singular qualities as a preacher, and to convince many who previously had contemplated the evangelical system of religion with great disrelish, that it was the *only* foundation of elevated morality, and that its cordial adoption was not necessarily repugnant to genius, learning, and intellectual cultivation.

Wherever he went, he was called to address overflowing congregations, and commonly of a remarkably mixed character. Churchmen and dissenters; men of rank and influence,

individuals in lower stations; men of simple piety, and others of deep theological knowledge; men who admired Christianity as a beautiful system, and those who received it into the heart by faith; men in doubt, others involved in unbelief:—all resorted to the place where he was announced as the preacher.

Mr. Hall's writings during his residence at Leicester, though by no means numerous, tended greatly to augment his influence upon society.

The first of these was published anonymously in the Eclectic Review, but left no room for hesitation as to its author. It was a critique upon a pamphlet entitled 'Zeal without Innovation,' which he undertook at the earnest entreaty of the late Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, "who, in common with all "the serious clergy in those parts, disapproved the pamphlet "highly." It may suffice for me to remark with regard to this critique, that while it places the controversy between the puritans and their opponents in a flood of light, and exhibits the essential importance of religious liberty to the growth, if not in some cases to the existence, of genuine, devotional Christianity; it presents a more admirable picture of the character of the Evangelical Clergy, a more powerful, liberal, and successful defence of their object and conduct, than has been, as yet, accomplished by any other person. The value set by the public upon this disquisition was evinced in the rapid sale of three editions, in a separate pamphlet, independently of its circulation in the Review.

Of the sermons published by Mr. Hall during his residence at Leicester, the first was preached in behalf of the Sunday School connected with his own congregation, and appeared under the title of 'The Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes.'

The two next sermons are of a much higher order. One of them, on 'The Discouragements and Supports of the Chris-

tian Minister,' was addressed to the Rev. James Robertson, on his ordination over the Independent Church at Stretton, Warwickshire; the other, which portrays the duties, discouragements, and support 'of the Christian Missionary,' was addressed to the Rev. Eustace Carey, on his designation as a missionary to India.

The sudden and untimely death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales was an event calculated to make the deepest impression upon a mind constituted like Mr. Hall's. He preached three sermons on the occasion, of which many of the auditors affirm, the one published was by no means the best. It, however, by universal acknowledgment, bore the palm above all the numerous valuable sermons that were then published.

Besides the various sermons and reviews which he wrote and published during his residence at Leicester, he composed for circulation among the associated Baptist churches in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Warwick, two tracts on the Work of the Holy Spirit, and on Hearing the Word; both deeply imbued with simple evangelical truth, and rich in excellent practical remarks, fitted for the beneficial perusal of all classes. There were also other compositions which he executed with singular felicity. I mean, his biographical sketches. They are, except the rapid but exquisite sketches of Brainerd, Fletcher of Madeley, and Henry Martyn, the delineations *of a friend;* and, perhaps, in a few particulars, need a slight allowance for the high colouring to which the warmth of friendship tempts us when meditating upon departed excellence; yet they are, on the whole, exact in the resemblance, and finely exemplify the author's varied powers, especially his delicate and accurate discrimination of the degrees and shades of human character.

For several years, about this time, Mr. Hall's thoughts were greatly occupied upon the subject of "Terms of Communion." His first publication in reference to it appeared in

1815: but they who were admitted to his intimacy, will recollect how often, three or four years before its appearance, he advocated a cautious revision of the practice of nearly all churches; and how successfully he refuted the arguments of those who favoured any narrow system of exclusion. Of the different writers who opposed Mr. Hall on this occasion, Mr. Kinghorn was unquestionably the most acute and learned. His volume should be read, in connexion with Mr. Hall's, by such as wish to view the question in all its bearings. Mr. Hall's part of the controversy is conducted with his characteristic frankness and decision; and evinces the same clearness, copiousness, strength, and majesty of diction, as he uniformly displayed upon every subject to which he bent his mind with all its power.

About the same time, or somewhat earlier, he announced his opinion of the disadvantage arising from the presence of others besides the communicants on sacramental occasions. In a short address he explained the customs of the early Christians with regard to the Lord's Supper, and showed that the admission of spectators, who were not members of the church, during the celebration, was comparatively a modern innovation. He pointed out the inconclusiveness of the ordinary arguments,—that spectators often receive benefit from the addresses of the ministers, and that therefore their exclusion was cutting them off from good, and that such exclusion was an infringement of religious liberty. He also stated that the presence of such spectators deprived him of much comfort during the communion service, and that he should regard their keeping away as a personal kindness to himself. His address was received with affectionate respect; and from that time those who had previously remained to witness the administration discontinued the custom.

Some time after the conclusion of his part of the controversy on "Terms of Communion," he made an effort to

persuade the church at Harvey Lane to adopt the practice of "mixed communion;" but, finding that it would disturb the peace which had so long subsisted in the society, he relinquished his intention, and recommended the formation of a distinct church on the mixed communion principle, its sacramental service being held on the morning of the same sabbath on which the "strict communion" church held its corresponding service in the afternoon. The plan was adopted and followed during Mr. Hall's continuance at Leicester, without causing any interruption of the harmony which prevailed among the different classes of worshippers.

In the year 1823, the minister of a unitarian congregation at Leicester having delivered a series of what are usually denominated "Challenge Lectures," in defence of his own opinions, to hear which individuals of other persuasions were publicly invited, Mr. Hall felt it to be his duty to offer a timely antidote to the evil. He therefore preached twelve lectures on the points at issue, and had the happiness to know that they were serviceable in checking the diffusion of Socinian error. His outline of these lectures, as well as fuller notes of two or three, are inserted in the fifth volume of his works.

The death of Dr. Ryland in 1825 led to Mr. Hall's invitation to take the pastoral office over the church at Broadmead, Bristol, an office which had been long and honourably sustained by that excellent individual. After some months spent in anxious deliberation, in advising with his friends, and seeking counsel from above, from the dread he felt lest he "should "rush into a sphere of action to which he was not called, and "offend God by deserting his proper post," he at length decided to dissolve his long and happy connexion with the church at Leicester. The day of separation, the last sacrament sabbath, March 26th, 1826, was a day of anguish to him and them, of which I shall not attempt the description. Suffice it to say, that he went through the ordinary public

duties of the day with tolerable composure; but at the sacramental service he strove in vain to conceal his emotion. In one of his addresses to the members of the church, on adverting to the pain of separation, he was so much affected that he sat down, covered his face with his hands, and wept; they sharing in his distress, gave unequivocal signs of the deepest feeling. Mr. Eustace Carey, who was present, continued the devotional part of the service, until Mr. Hall was sufficiently recovered to proceed. At the close of the solemnity the weeping became again universal, and they parted "sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no "more."

Mr. Hall was in his sixty-second year when he removed to Bristol, the scene of his first continuous labours, and now to become the scene of his closing ministry. Some of the friends of his early life still survived to welcome his return among them; and many others who had profited by his pulpit exertions on his periodical visits to Bristol, congratulated themselves that he to whom, under God, they owed so much, had become their pastor. All things indeed, except his infirm state of health, seemed to conspire in promoting his own happiness as well as the prosperity of the church with which he had again connected himself.

The course of his life at home, when not interrupted by visitors, was very uniform. He generally rose and took his breakfast about nine o'clock. Breakfast was immediately succeeded by family worship. At this exercise he went regularly through the Scriptures, reading a portion of the Old Testament in the morning and of the New Testament in the evening. In the prayer that succeeded, he was not in the habit of forming his petitions on the passage of Scripture just read, though the prayer was usually of considerable length, and very minute in its appropriation. He adverted specifically to all the persons belonging to his family, present and absent; never for-

got the people of his care; and dwelt on the distinct cases of members of the Church that were under any kind of trial or affliction.

After breakfast and worship, he retired into his study, and uniformly spent some time in devotion, afterward generally reading a portion of the Hebrew Bible. The remainder of the morning until dinner, about three o'clock, was spent in reading some work of learning, or of severe thought. After dinner he generally retired to his study, and, if not in so much pain as to prevent it, slept for some time.

On Tuesday evenings are held what are termed "the con-"ferences," in the vestry of the Broadmead chapel: they are meetings ordinarily attended by about two hundred persons, at which two of the students belonging to the Bristol Education Society, or one of the students and the president, speak on a passage of Scripture previously selected for the purpose. Mr. Hall always attended on these occasions, and concluded by speaking for about a quarter of an hour, on the subject of the preceding addresses. He also attended the prayer meetings, in the same place, on Thursday evenings; except once a month, namely, on the Thursday previous to the administration of the Lord's Supper, when he preached.

Periodical private fasts, such as those which he observed at Leicester, he continued to observe at Bristol, making them seasons of extraordinary self-examination, prayer, and renewed dedication to God. He was not in the habit of keeping a regular journal, nor, generally speaking, did he approve of it, from a persuasion that it tempted to an artificial tone of expression which did not accord with the actual state of the heart. But on some solemn occasions he made a short note in one of his memorandum-books, containing hints of texts, &c.

Thus: "New-year's-day, January 1st, 1826. I have begun the year with a sincere resolution, in the strength of divine grace, to devote myself wholly and entirely to God: but, knowing my extreme weakness and

corruption, I dare place no dependence whatever on my own resolutions. I have, on many occasions, found them unstable as water. I can only cast myself on the mercy of my God, and cry, with the Psalmist, 'Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.' O thou most holy and merciful Lord God, I beseech Thee to take up thine abode in my heart, and shape me entirely anew. Amen. Amen."

The indications of infirm age now rapidly exhibited themselves, but happily were unaccompanied by a decaying mind, or a querulous spirit. The language of his conduct, and of his heart, corresponded with that of the pious ancient, "Lord, "give me patience now, and ease hereafter! If tempests "come, they will not last long, but soon will be hushed into an "eternal calm."

His inability to take exercise, on account of the gradual increase of his complaint, gave rise, about six years before his death, to another disorder, formidable in its nature, and fatal in its issue. The indications of a plethoric habit became more and more apparent. The malady, thus produced, becoming more and more severe, Mr. Hall, when in London in 1828, was persuaded by his friends to take the advice of an eminent physician; from which, however, no permanent good resulted. By the summer of 1830, the disorder had increased so seriously, that his medical friends at Bristol recommended a suspension of his pastoral duties for a few weeks, that he might try the effect of a total change of air and scene.

He therefore spent some time at Coleford, in the forest of Dean, in the society of his old and valued friend, the Rev. Isaiah Birt. He also spent a few weeks at Cheltenham. At both these places he preached with his accustomed talent; and his general appearance, too clearly indicating that the close of his ministerial labours was at hand, gave a deeper impression to his instructions and exhortations.

The last service at Broadmead in which Mr. Hall took any part was the church meeting (when only the members of the church are assembled) on Wednesday the 9th of February.

His closing prayer, on that occasion, is spoken of as most spiritual and elevated, exhibiting, in its highest manifestation, the peculiar union of humility, benevolence, and fervour, by which his devotional exercises had very long been characterised.

On the next evening, Thursday, the usual monthly sermon, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper, was to have been delivered; but Mr. Hall's discharge of this duty was prevented by a severe attack of the complaint in his chest, which came on just after he had retired to his study to prepare for that service. This was the commencement of the series of paroxysms which terminated in his dissolution.

From this time the paroxysms increased rapidly both in frequency and severity; and Mr. Hall, in the intervals between their occurrence, was usually so weak and exhausted as seldom to be able to converse with those around him. His expressions, however, insulated and broken as they often were, proved that he was able fully to exercise that trust in God which is the grand principle of religion, and that thus trusting in him, his soul was kept in peace. No murmuring, no language of irritability, escaped from his lips.

When he first announced his apprehension that he should never again minister among his people, he immediately added, "But I am in God's hands, and I rejoice that I am. I am "God's creature, at his disposal, for life or death; and that "is a great mercy."

Again, "I have not one anxious thought, either for life or "death. What I dread most are dark days. But I have had "none yet; and I hope I shall not have any."

Again, "I fear pain more than death. If I could die "easily, I think I would rather go than stay; for I have seen "enough of the world, and I have a humble hope."

On another occasion, a friend having said to him, "This "God will be our God;" he replied, "Yes, he will—he will "be our guide even unto death."

On recovering from one of his severe paroxysms, he adverted to the affectionate attentions of his beloved wife and daughters, as well as his numerous comforts, and exclaimed, "What a "mercy it is to have so many alleviations! I might have "been deprived of all these comforts—I might have been in "poverty—I might have been the most abject wretch on the "face of the earth."

Mrs. Hall, in the course of the morning on which he died, remarking to him that he appeared better, and expressing her hopes that he would recover, he replied, "Ah, my dear, let us "*hope* for the best, and *prepare* for the worst." He then stated his opinion that this day would be critical. When his medical attendants met in consultation, a little after noon, he seemed rather better; and Mr. Chandler left him between one and two, reclining on the sofa, leaning on his elbow with as much muscular energy as ever.

"In a very short time," says this gentleman, "and before I had reached home, I was summoned to behold the last agonizing scene of this great and extraordinary man. His difficulty of breathing had suddenly increased to a dreadful and final paroxysm. It seems, this last paroxysm came on more gradually than was usual with those which preceded. Mr. Hall finding his breathing becoming much worse, first rose more on his elbow, then raised his body, supporting himself with his hand, till the increasing agitation obliged him to rise completely on the sofa, and to place his feet in hot water—the usual means he resorted to for relief in every paroxysm. Mrs. Hall, observing a fixation of his eyes, and an unusual expression on his countenance, and indeed in his whole manner, became alarmed by the sudden impression that he was dying; and exclaimed in great agitation, 'This can't be dying!' when he replied, 'It is death—it is death—death! Oh the sufferings of this body!' Mrs. Hall then asking him, 'But are you comfortable in your mind?' he immediately answered, 'Very comfortable—very comfortable:' and exclaimed, 'Come, Lord Jesus—Come.'——He then hesitated, as if incapable of bringing out the last word; and one of his daughters, involuntarily as it were, anticipated him by saying, 'Quickly!' on which her departing father gave her a look expressive of the most complacent delight.

"On entering his room, I found him sitting on the sofa, surrounded by his lamenting family; with one foot in the hot water, and the other

spasmodically grasping the edge of the bath; his frame waving in violent, almost convulsive heavings, sufficiently indicative of the process of dissolution. I hastened, though despairingly, to administer such stimulants as might possibly avert the threatening termination of life; and as I sat by his side for this purpose he threw his arm over my shoulders for support, with a look of evident satisfaction that I was near him. He said to me, 'I am dying: death is come at last: all will now be useless.' As I pressed upon him draughts of stimulants, he intimated that he would take them if I wished; but he believed all was useless. On my asking him if he suffered much, he replied, 'Dreadfully.' The rapidly increasing gasping soon overpowered his ability to swallow, or to speak except in monosyllables, few in number, which I could not collect; but, whatever might be the degree of his suffering (and great it must have been), there was no failure of his mental vigour or composure. Indeed, so perfect was his consciousness, that in the midst of these last agonies, he intimated to me very shortly before the close, with his accustomed courteousness, a fear lest he should fatigue me by his pressure; and when his family, one after another, gave way in despair, he followed them with sympathizing looks, as they were obliged to be conveyed from the room. This was his last voluntary movement; for immediately a general convulsion seized him, and he quickly expired."

O how inconceivably blessed is the change, when at the moment of utmost agony the soul enters the regions of endless joy; passes from the land of the dying to the land of the living; from the society of saints to the blissful presence of the King of Saints, where knowledge, illumination, purity, and love, flow for ever and ever from the Inexhaustible Fountain! Such is the ineffable reward which awaits all the faithful followers of the Lamb. "Father, I will that they also "whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they "may behold my glory."

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. HALL'S CHARACTER AS A PREACHER.

By JOHN FOSTER.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. HALL'S CHARACTER AS A PREACHER.

The biographical and literary illustrations of Mr. Hall's character and performances, expected from the highly qualified Editor of his works, and from the eminent person who has engaged for a part of that tribute to his memory,* may render any formal attempt in addition liable to be regarded as both superfluous and intrusive; the public, besides, have been extensively and very long in possession of their own means of forming that judgment which has pronounced him the first preacher of the age: and again, so soon after the removal of such a man, while the sentiments of friendship and admiration are finding their natural expression in the language of unrestrained eulogy, it is hardly permitted to assume a judicial impartiality. From these considerations it has been with very great reluctance that I have consented, in compliance with the wishes of some of Mr. Hall's friends, to attempt a short description of what he was in the special capacity of a preacher; a subject which must indeed be of chief account in *any* memorial of him; but may also admit of being taken in some degree separately from the general view of his life, character, and writings.

For more reasons than that it must be one cause, added to others, of an imperfect competence to describe him in that capacity, I have to regret the disadvantage of not having been more than very occasionally, perhaps hardly ten times

* These observations were written and transmitted to the publishers a considerable time before the lamented and unexpected decease of Sir James Mackintosh. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning, that the writer had felt it a propriety to abstain from any attempt at a comparison between Mr. Hall and the most celebrated English and French preachers, or ancient and modern orators of other classes; confidently expecting (besides being conscious of deficient qualifications), that this would be a favourite exercise of Sir James's consummate critical judgment.

in all, a hearer of Mr. Hall till within the last few years of his life. It appears to be the opinion of all those attendants on his late ministrations, who had also been his hearers in former times (and, from recollection of the few sermons which I heard many years since, my own impression would be the same), that advancing age, together with the severe and almost continual pressure of pain, had produced a sensible effect on his preaching, perceptible in an abatement of the energy and splendour of his eloquence. He was less apt to be excited to that intense ardour of emotion and utterance which so often, animating to the extreme emphasis a train of sentiments impressive by their intrinsic force, had held dominion over every faculty of thought and feeling in a large assembly. It is not meant, however, that a considerable degree of this ancient fire did not frequently appear glowing and shining again. Within the course of a moderate number of sermons there would be one or more which brought back the preacher of the times long past, to the view of those who had heard him in those times.

I have reason to believe, that this representation of his diminished energy should be nearly limited to a very late period, the period when an increased, but reluctant, use of opiates became absolutely necessary, to enable him to endure the pain which he had suffered throughout his life, and when another obscure malady was gradually working towards a fatal termination. For, at a time not more than seven or eight years since, I heard in close succession several sermons delivered in so ardent an excitement of sentiment and manner as I could not conceive it possible for himself or any other orator to have surpassed. Even so lately as within the last four or five years of his life, the recurrence of something approaching to this was not so unfrequent as to cause his friends the painful feeling (sometimes experienced by the hearers of an excellent minister declining into old age) that he was no longer to be regarded as the preacher that he once had been.

There was some compensation for the abatement of this character of force and vehemence, supplied by a certain tone of kindness, a milder pathos, more sensibly expressive of benevolence towards his hearers, than the impetuous, the almost imperious energy, so often predominant when an

undepressed vitality of the physical system was auxiliary to the utmost excitement of his mind.

There seems to be an agreement of opinion that a considerable decline of the power or the activity of his *imagination* was evident in the latter part of his life. The felicities of figure and allusion of all kinds, sometimes illustrative by close analogy, often gay and humorous, sometimes splendid, less abounded in his conversation. And in his public discourses there appeared to be a much rarer occurrence of those striking images in which a series of thoughts seemed to take fire in passing on, to end in a still more striking figure, with the effect of an explosion. So that, from persons who would occasionally go to hear him with much the same taste and notions as they would carry to a theatrical or mere oratorical exhibition, and caring little about religious truth and instruction, there might be heard complaints of disappointment, expressed in terms of more than hinted depreciation. They had hardly any other idea of eloquence, even that of the pulpit, than that it must be *brilliant;* and they certainly might happen to hear, at the late period in question, several of his sermons which had not more than a very moderate share of this attraction. But even such persons, if disposed to attend his preaching regularly for a few weeks, might have been sure to hear some sermons in which the solidity of thought was finely inspirited with the sparkling quality they were requiring.

But whatever reduction his imagination may have suffered from age, and the oppression of disease and pain, it is on all hands admitted that there was no decline in what he valued far more in both himself and others, and what all, except very young or defectively cultivated persons, and inferior poets, must regard as the highest of mental endowments—the intellectual power. His wonderful ability for comprehending and reasoning; his quickness of apprehension, his faculty for analyzing a subject to its elements, for seizing on the essential points, for going back to principles and forward to consequences, and for bringing out into an intelligible and sometimes very obvious form, what appeared obscure or perplexed, remained unaltered to the last. This noble intellect thus seen with a diminished lustre of imagination, suggested the idea of a lofty eminence raising its form and summit clear

and bare toward the sky, losing nothing of its imposing aspect by absence of the wreaths of tinctured clouds which may have invested it at another season.

It is to be observed, that imagination had always been a subordinate faculty in his mental constitution. It was never of that prolific power which threw so vast a profusion over the oratory of Jeremy Taylor or of Burke; or which could tempt him to revel, for the pure luxury of the indulgence, as they appear to have sometimes done, in the exuberance of imaginative genius.

As a preacher, none of those contemporaries who have not seen him in the pulpit, or of his readers in another age, will be able to conceive an adequate idea of Mr. Hall. His personal appearance was in striking conformity to the structure and temper of his mind. A large-built, robust figure, was in perfect keeping with a countenance formed as if on purpose for the most declared manifestation of internal power, a power impregnable in its own strength, as in a fortress, and constantly, without an effort, in a state for action.* That countenance was usually of a cool, unmoved mien, at the beginning of the public service; and sometimes, when he was not greatly excited by his subject, or was repressed by pain, would not acquire a great degree of temporary expression during the whole discourse. At other times it would kindle into an ardent aspect as he went on, and toward the conclusion become lighted up almost into a glare. But, for myself, I doubt whether I was not quite as much arrested by his appearance in the interval while a short part of the service performed without his assistance, immediately before the sermon, allowed him to sit in silence. With his eyes closed, his features as still as in death, and his head sinking down almost on his chest, he presented an image of entire abstraction. For a moment, perhaps, he would seem to wake to a perception of the scene before him, but instantly relapse into the same state. It was interesting to imagine the strong

* The portrait to accompany the works, highly elaborated, and true to the general form and lineaments, fails to give exactly that stern, intense, and somewhat formidable *expression*, which the painter, Mr. Branwhite, was very successful in seizing, in spite of circumstances the most unfavourable for obtaining a likeness. Mr. Hall had an insuperable aversion to sit for his portrait.

internal agency, which it was certain was then employed on the yet unknown subject about to be unfolded to the auditory.

His manner of public prayer, considered as an exercise of thought, was not exactly what would have been expected from a mind constituted like his. A manner so different in that exercise from its operation in all other employments could hardly have been unintentional: but on what principle it was preferred cannot be known or conjectured. It is to the *intellectual* consistence and order of his thoughts in public prayer that I am adverting, in uncertainty how far the opinion of others may have been the same; as to the *devotional* spirit, there could be but one impression. There was the greatest seriousness and simplicity, the plainest character of genuine piety, humble and prostrate before the Almighty. Both solemnity and good taste forbade indulgence in anything showy or elaborately ingenious in such an employment. But there might have been, without an approach to any such impropriety, and as it always appeared to me, with great advantage, what I may venture to call a more *thinking* performance of the exercise; a series of ideas more reflectively conceived, and more connected and classed in their order. Many of the conceptions were not, individually, presented in that specific expression which conveys one certain thing to the apprehension; nor were there, generally speaking, those *trains* of petitionary thought, which would strongly fix, and for a while detain, the attention on each distinctly, in the succession of the subjects of devotional interest.

No one, I may presume, will be so mistaken as to imagine, that *pieces of discussion*, formal developments of doctrine, nice casuistical distinctions, like sections of a theological essay, are meant in pleading that it must be of great advantage for engaging attention, exciting interest, and inducing reflection, that instead of a rapidly discursive succession of ideas, the leader of the devotions should often dwell awhile on one and another important topic, and with a number of accumulated sentiments specifically appropriate to each; in order that its importance, thus exposed and aggravated, may constrain the auditory to reflect how deeply they are concerned in that one subject of petition. Any one pernicious thing deprecated—a spiritual evil, a vice of the heart or life, an easily besetting

temptation, a perilous delusion into which men are liable to fall, or a temporal calamity,—and so, on the other hand, any one of the good gifts implored,—might thus be exposed in magnified and palpable importance before the minds of the people.

Will it be objected that this would tend to a practice not consistent either with the comprehensiveness of religion, or with the generality of scope requisite to adapt the prayer to the aggregate interests of a very mixed assemblage; that it would be to confine the attention to a few selected particulars of religion, losing the view of its wide compass; and to reduce the prayer, which should be for all the people collectively regarded, to a set of adaptations to certain supposed individual cases, or small classes, singled out in the congregation, to the exclusion, in effect, of the general body? I may answer that, in perfect safety from shrinking into such specialty and exclusiveness, the great element of religion may be resolved into particular subjects and adaptations in public prayer. Particular parts of divine truth and Christian morals may come in view as suggesting matter of distinct and somewhat prolonged petition, conceived in terms that shall constantly and closely recognise the condition of the people. A man well exercised in religion, and well acquainted with the states and characters of men, might recount to himself a greater number of such topics than the longest book in the Bible comprises chapters; and would see that each of them might beneficially be somewhat amplified by thoughts naturally arising upon it; that one of them would be peculiarly appropriate to one portion of the assembly, another of them adapted to several conditions, and some of them commensurate with the interests of all. In one prayer of moderate length he might comprehend a number of these distinguishable topics, thus severally kept in view for a few moments; and, varying them from time to time, he might bring the concerns which are the business of prayer, in *parts*, and with special effects, before the minds of the people, instead of giving the course of his thoughts every time to the guidance of entirely accidental and miscellaneous suggestion. I might ask, why should *sermons* be constructed to fix the attention of a mixed congregation on distinct parts of religion, instead of being, each in succession, vaguely discursive over the whole field? I would not say that the two exercises are

under exactly the same law; but still, is there a propriety, that in a discourse for religious instruction some selected topics should stand forth in marked designation, to work one certain effect on the understanding or the feelings, and *no* propriety that any corresponding principle should be observed in those prayers which may be supposed to request, and with much more than a passing momentary interest, such things as that instruction would indicate as most important to be obtained?

But besides all this, there is no hazard in affirming, that prayers which do not detain the thoughts on any certain things in particular, take very slight hold of the auditors. Things noted so transiently do not admit of a deliberate attention, and seem as if they did not claim it; the assembly are not made conscious how much they want what is petitioned for; and at the close would be at a loss to recollect any one part as having awaked a strong consciousness that *that* is what they have *themselves* in a special manner to pray for when alone.

Such observations are, under small limitation, applicable to Mr. Hall's public prayer. The succession of sentences appeared almost casual, or in a connexion too slight to hold the hearer's mind distinctly, for a time, to a certain object. A very large proportion of the series consisted of texts of Scripture; and, as many of these were figurative, often requiring, in order to apprehend their plain sense, an act of thought for which there was not time, the mind was led on with a very defective conception of the exact import of much of the phraseology. He did not avail himself of the portion of Scripture he had just read, as a guiding suggestion of subjects for the prayer; and very seldom made it bear any particular relation to what was to follow as the subject of the discourse.

One could wish that, with the exception of very peculiar cases, *personalities*, when they must be introduced, should be as brief as possible in public prayer; especially such as point to individuals who are present, and whose own feelings, one should think, would earnestly deprecate their being made conspicuous objects of the prolonged attention of the congregation. Mr. Hall's consideration for individuals standing officially, or brought incidentally, in association with an assembly, often led him to a length and particularity in personal

references, which one could not help regretting, as an encroachment on the time and more proper concerns of the exercise, and as a sanction lent by an example of such high authority to a practice which leads the thoughts quite away from the interests in common; tempting the auditors into an impertinence of imagination about the persons so placed in exhibition, their characters, domestic circumstances, and so forth; with possibly a silent criticism, not much in harmony with devotion, on some flaw of consistency between the terms which the speaker is now employing, and those which he may be heard, or may have been heard, to use in other times and places respecting the same individuals. In the laudatory tone and epithets into which he inevitably glides (for he never adverts to any *faults* of the persons thus prominently held in view, with prayer for their correction), it is hardly possible for him, while the matter is kept long under operation, to avoid its changing colour, from that of reverence towards God, into that of compliment to a fellow-mortal and fellow-sinner.

If there was a defect of concentration, an indeterminateness in the direction of thought, in Mr. Hall's public prayers, the reverse was conspicuous in his preaching. He was inferior to no preacher of any period in the capital excellence of having a definite purpose, a distinct assignable subject, in each sermon. Sometimes, indeed, as when intruders had robbed him of all his time for study, or when his spirits had been consumed by a prolonged excess of pain, he was reduced to take the licence of discoursing with less definite scope, on the common subjects of religion. But he was never pleased with any scheme of a sermon in which he could not, at the outset, say exactly what it was he meant to do. He told his friends that he always felt "he could do nothing with" a text or subject till it resolved and shaped itself into a topic of which he could see the form and outline, and which he could take out both from the extensive system of religious truth, and, substantially, from its connexion with the more immediately related parts of that system; at the same time not failing to indicate that connexion, by a few brief clear remarks to show the consistency and mutual corroboration of the portions thus taken apart for separate discussion. This method insured to him and his hearers the advantage of an

ample variety. Some of them remember instances in which he preached, with but a short interval, two sermons on what would have appeared, to common apprehension, but *one* subject, a very limited section of doctrine, or duty; yet the sermons went on quite different tracks of thought, presenting separate views of the subject, related to each other only by a general consistency. His survey of the extended field of religion was in the manner of a topographer, who fixes for a while on one separate district, and then on another, finding in each, though it were of very confined dimensions, many curious matters of research, and many interesting objects; while yet he shall possess the wide information which keeps the country at large so comprehensively within his view, that he can notice and illustrate, as he proceeds, all the characters of the relation of the parts to one another and to the whole.

The preacher uniformly began his sermons in a low voice, and with sentences of the utmost plainness both of thought and language. It was not, I believe, in observance of any precept of the rhetoricians, or with any conscious intention, that he did so; it was simply the manner in which his mind naturally set in for the consideration of an important subject. This perfect plainness of the introduction, quietly delivered in a voice deficient in tone and force, and difficult to be heard at first by a large part of the congregation, occasioned surprise and disappointment sometimes to strangers drawn by curiosity to hear "the celebrated orator," in the expectation, perhaps, of his going off in powerful sallies, flourishes, and fulminations. "Can this be he?" has been the question whispered between some two such expectants, seated together. A short comment on the facts in Scripture history found in connexion with the text, or which had been the occasion of the words; or on circumstances in the condition of the primitive church; or on some ancient or modern error relating to the subject to be proposed; would give, within the space of five or ten minutes, the condensed and perspicuous result of much reading and study. Sometimes he would go immediately to his subject, after a very few introductory sentences. And the attentive hearer was certain to apprehend what that subject was. It was stated precisely, yet in so simple a manner as to preclude all appearance of elaborate definition.

The distribution was always perfectly inartificial, cast in an

order of the least formality of division that could mark an intelligible succession of parts, very seldom exceeding the number of three or four; which set forth the elements of the subject in the merest natural form, if I may express it so, of their subsistence. Generally, each of these parts was illustrated in two or three particulars, noted as first, second, and perhaps third. He never attempted, never thought of, those schemes of arrangement in which parts are ingeniously placed in antithesis, or in such other disposition as to reflect cross-lights on one another, producing surprise and curious expectation, with a passing glance of thought at the dexterity of the preacher who can work them in their contrasted positions to one ultimate effect. It is not denied that such ingenious and somewhat quaint devices of arrangement have had their advantage, in the hands of men who made them the vehicles of serious and important sentiment, really desirous not to amuse but to attract and instruct. They catch attention, make the progress and stages of the discourse more sensible by the transitions between points apparently so abruptly asunder, and leave more durable traces in the memory than, it was often complained, could be preserved by Mr. Hall's sermons. But such a mode was entirely foreign to the constitution and action of his mind. He never came on his subject by anything like manœuvre; never approached it *sideways*; never sought to secure himself resources in particular parts, corners, and adjuncts, against the effects of a failure in the main substance; never threw out the force of a subject in off-sets; never expended it in dispersed varieties. He had it in one full single view before him, the parts lying in natural contiguity as a whole; and advanced straight forward in pursuance of a plain leading principle; looking to the right and the left just so far as to preserve the due breadth of the illustration.

This is meant as a description generally applicable to the earlier and middle portions of the discourse, which were often, as regarded in a purely intellectual view, much the most valuable.* It was highly interesting, even as a mere affair

* There was a remission of strict connexion of thought towards the conclusion, where he threw himself loose into a strain of declamation, always earnest, and often fervid. This was of great effect in securing a degree of favour with many, to whom so intellectual a preacher would not otherwise have been acceptable; it was this that reconciled persons

of mental operation, independently of the religious object, to accompany this part of his progress; from the announcement of his subject (sometimes in the form of a general proposition founded on the text, oftener in a more free exposition), onward through a series of statements, illustrations, and distinctions, till an important doctrine became unfolded to view, full in its explication, and strong in its evidence. In this progress he would take account of any objections which he deemed it of consequence to obviate, meeting them without evasion, with acuteness and exact knowledge, available to the point. Every mode and resource of argument was at his command; but he was singularly successful in that which is technically denominated *reductio ad absurdum*. Many a specious notion and cavil was convicted of being not only erroneous, but foolish.

He displayed, in a most eminent degree, the rare excellence of a perfect conception and expression of every thought, however rapid the succession. There were no half-formed ideas, no misty semblances of a meaning, no momentary lapses of intellect into an utterance at hazard, no sentences without a distinct object, and serving merely for the continuity of speaking; every sentiment had at once a palpable shape, and an appropriateness to the immediate purpose. If now and then, which was seldom, a word, or a part of a sentence, slightly failed to denote precisely the thing he intended, it was curious to observe how perfectly he was aware of it, and how he would instantly throw in an additional clause, which did signify it precisely. Another thing for curious observation was, that sometimes, in the middle of a sentence, or just as it came to an end, there would suddenly occur to him some required point of discrimination, some exception perhaps, or limitation, to the assertion he was in the act of making; or at another time, a circumstance of reinforcement extraneously suggested, a transient ray, as it were, from a foreign and distant object; and then he would, at the prompting of the moment, intimate the qualifying reference in a brief parenthesis in the sentence, or

of simple piety and little cultivated understanding. Many who might follow him with very imperfect apprehension and satisfaction through the preceding parts, could *reckon* on being warmly interested at the latter end. In that part his utterance acquired a remarkable change of intonation, expressive of his own excited feelings.

by a reverting glance at the end of it. In these last lines of the description, I have in view the more closely intellectual parts of his public exercises, the parts employed in the ascertainment and elucidation of truth. There will be occasion, towards the close of these notices, to attribute some defect of discrimination and caution to other parts or qualities of his sermons.

It were superfluous to say that Mr. Hall's powerful reasoning faculty, and his love and habit of reasoning, went into his preaching; but I may be allowed to observe, that the argumentative tenour thence prevailing through it, was of a somewhat different modification from the reasoning process exhibited in the composition of some of the most distinguished sermon-writers. To say that he had much, very much, of the essence and effect of reasoning without its forms, will perhaps be considered as unqualified praise. Certainly we have a good riddance in the obsoleteness of the cumbrous and barbarous technicalities of logic in use among schoolmen, and of which traces remain in the works of some of our old divines, especially of the polemic class. But, divested of every sort of technicality, a natural and easy logic (easy, I mean, for the hearers' or readers' apprehension) may pervade a discourse in such manner, that it shall have more of the consistence of a contexture than of an accumulation. The train of thinking may preserve a link of connexion by the dependence of the following thought on the foregoing; that succeeding thought not only being just in itself and pertinent to the matter in hand, but being so still more specially in virtue of resulting, by obvious deduction, or necessary continuation, from the preceding; thus at once giving and receiving force by the connexion. It is of great advantage for the strength of a discourse, when it is so conceived as to require the not unfrequent recurrence of the signs, "for," "because," "if—then," "consequently," "so that," and the other familiar logical marks of conjunction and dependence in the series of ideas.

This will not be mistaken to mean any thing like a long uninterrupted process, as in a mathematical demonstration, carried on in a rigorous strictness of method, and with a dependence of the validity of some one final result on the correctness of each and every movement in the long operation. No lengthened courses of deduction are required or admissible

.n popular instruction; the discourse must, at no distant intervals, come to pauses and changes, introducing matters of argument and illustration which are chosen by the preacher for their general pertinence and effectiveness to the subject, rather than by any strict logical rule of continuity; and he is not required to answer a captious question of a disciple of the schools whether this topic, and this again, be in the most exact line of sequence with the foregoing. It is sufficient that there be an obvious *general* relation, connecting the successive portions of the discourse; so that each in the succession shall take along with it the substantial effect of the preceding But through the extent of each of these portions, the course of thinking might be conducted in a certain order of consecutive dependence, which should make the thoughts not merely to coincide, but to verify and authenticate one another while they coincide, in bearing on the proposed object. And such a mode of working them into evidence and application, would give them a closer grapple on the mind.

There will be testimony to this from the experience of readers conversant with the best examples; for instance, the sermons of South, which, glaringly censurable as many of them are on very grave accounts, are admirable for this linked succession, this passing to a further idea by *consequence* from the preceding, and not merely by that principle of relation between them, that they both tend to the same effect. Yet, at the same time, so far is he from exhibiting a cold dry argument, like Clarke in his Sermons, that his ratiocination is abundantly charged with what may be called the matter of passion; often indeed malicious and fierce, sometimes solemnly impressive; at all events serving to show that strong argument may be worked in fire as well as in frost.* It has always appeared to me, that Mr. Hall's discourses would have had one more ingredient of excellence, if the rich and strong production of thought, while pressing, as it always did, with an united impulse toward the point in view, had been drawn out in a sequence of more express and palpable dependence and concatenation. The conjunction of the ideas would some-

* Among others, I might name Stillingfleet's sermons, as exemplifying this manner of connexion in the series of ideas. If reference were made to ancient eloquence, Demosthenes would be cited as the transcendent example of this excellence.

times appear to be rather that of contiguity than of implication. The successive sentences would come like separate independent dictates of intellect, the absence of which would indeed have been a loss to the general force, but not a breach of connexion. It must be observed, however, that when special occasions required it, he would bring into exercise the most severe logic in the most explicit form. Many fine examples of this are found in his controversy on Terms of Communion. And such would, at times, occur in his sermons.

Every cultivated hearer must have been struck with admiration of the preacher's mastery of language, a refractory servant to many who have made no small efforts to command it. I know not whether he sometimes painfully felt its deficiency and untowardness for his purpose; but it *seemed* to answer all his requirements, whether for cutting nice discriminations, or presenting abstractions in a tangible form, or investing grand subjects with splendour, or imparting a pathetic tone to expostulation, or inflaming the force of invective, or treating common topics without the insipidity of commonplace diction. His language in the pulpit was hardly ever colloquial, but neither was it of an artificial cast. It was generally as little *bookish* as might consist with an uniformly sustained and serious style. Now and then there would be a scholastic term beyond the popular understanding, so familiar to himself, from his study of philosophers and old divines, as to be the first word occurring to him in his rapid delivery. Some conventional phrases which he was in the habit of using (for instance, "to usher in," "to give birth to," &c.), might better have been exchanged for plain unfigurative verbs. His language in preaching, as in conversation, was in one considerable point better than in his well-known and elaborately composed sermons, in being more natural and flexible. When he set in reluctantly upon that operose employment, his style was apt to assume a certain processional stateliness of march, a rhetorical rounding of periods, a too frequent inversion of the natural order of the sentence, with a morbid dread of degrading it to end in a particle or other small-looking word; a structure in which I doubt whether the augmented appearance of strength and dignity be a compensation for the sacrifice of a natural, living, and variable freedom of composition. A remarkable difference will be perceived between the highly-

wrought sermons long since published, and the short ones inserted in the fifth volume, which were written without a thought of the press; a difference to the advantage of the latter in the grace of simplicity.* Both in his conversation and his public speaking, there was often, besides and beyond the merit of clearness, precision, and brevity, a certain felicity of diction; something which, had it not been common in his discourse, would have appeared the special *good luck* of falling without care of selection on the aptest words, cast in elegant combination, and producing an effect of beauty even when there was nothing expressly ornamental.

From the pleasure there is in causing and feeling surprise by the exaggeration of what *is* extraordinary into something absolutely marvellous, persons of Mr. Hall's acquaintance, especially in his earlier life, have taken great licence of fiction in stories of his extemporaneous eloquence. It was not uncommon to have an admired sermon asserted to have been thrown off in an emergency on the strength of an hour's previous study. This matter has been set right in Dr. Gregory's curious and interesting note (prefixed to the sermon on Modern Infidelity) describing the preacher's usual manner of preparation, and showing that it was generally made with deliberate care.† But whatever proportion of the discourse was from premeditation, the reader could not distinguish that from what was extemporaneous. There were no periods betraying, by a mechanical utterance, a mere recitation. Every sentence had so much the spirit and significance of present immediate thinking, as to prove it a living dictate of the speaker's mind, whether it came in the way of recollection, or in the fresh production of the moment. And in most of his sermons, the more animated ones especially, a very large proportion of

* I may refer also to the *reported* sermons given in the sixth volume of his works; as to many of which any observant hearer of Mr. Hall will testify, though he should not have heard those particular sermons, that they very faithfully represent the preacher's extemporaneous diction.

† Once, in a conversation with a few friends who had led him to talk of his preaching, and to answer, among other questions, one respecting this supposed and reported extemporaneous production of the most striking parts of his sermons in the early period of his ministry, he surprised us by saying that most of them, so far from being extemporaneous, had been so deliberately prepared, that the words were selected, and the construction and order of the sentences adjusted.

what he spoke must have been of this immediate origination; it was impossible that less than this should be the effect of the excited state of a mind so powerful in thinking, so extremely prompt in the use of that power, and in possession of such copious materials.

Some of his discourses were of a calm temperament nearly throughout; even these, however, never failing to end with a pressing enforcement of the subject. But in a considerable portion of them (a large one, it is said, during all but a late period of his life) he warmed into emotion before he had advanced through what might be called the discussion. The intellectual process, the explications, arguments, and exemplifications, would then be animated, without being confused, obscured, or too much dilated, by that more vital element which we denominate sentiment; while striking figures, at intervals, emitted a momentary brightness; so that the understanding, the passions, and the imagination of the hearers were all at once brought under command, by a combination of the forces adapted to seize possession of each. The spirit of such discourses would grow into intense fervour, even before they approached the conclusion. The preacher had the great advantage for popular eloquence, of a temperament which permitted and prompted the emanation of his whole soul in public; not partaking, in the least, of the feeling which, whether of natural reserve or from secluded habits of life, may have had a repressive and cooling effect on some men's public addresses—a feeling as if some of the emotions of piety belonged too intimately and personally to the individual's own mind alone, or to the communications of a few congenial friends, to be committed to the imperfect sympathies of a large promiscuous assembly. When he became animated with his subject all the recesses of his mind appeared to open; all his emotions, affections, passions, were given forth in the most unreserved and unrestrained effusion.

In the most admired of his sermons, and invariably in all his preaching, there was one excellence, of a moral kind, in which few eloquent preachers have ever equalled, and none ever did or will surpass him. It was so remarkable and obvious, that the reader (if having been also a hearer of Mr. Hall) will have gone before me when I name—oblivion of self. The preacher appeared wholly absorbed in his subject,

given up to its possession, as the single actuating principle and impulse of the mental achievement which he was as if unconsciously performing:—*as if* unconsciously; for it is impossible it could be literally so; yet his absorption was so evident, there was so clear an absence of every betraying sign of vanity, as to leave no doubt that reflection on himself, the tacit thought, "It is I that am displaying this excellence of speech," was the faintest action of his mind. His auditory were sure that it was in relation to his subject, and not to himself, that he regarded the feelings with which they might hear him.

What a contrast to divers showy and admired orators, whom the reader will remember to have seen in the pulpit elsewhere! For who has not witnessed, perhaps more times than a few, a pulpit exhibition, which unwittingly told that the speaker was in resolute competition with his sacred theme for precedence in the favour of his auditory? Who has not observed the glimmer of a self-complacent smile, partly reflected as it were on his visage, from the plausible visages confronting him, and partly lighted from within, by the blandishment of a still warmer admirer? Who has not seen him swelling with a tone and air of conscious importance in some specially *fine* passage; prolonging it, holding it up, spreading out another and yet another scarlet fold, with at last a temporary stop to survey the assembly, as challenging their tributary looks of admiration, radiating on himself, or interchanged among sympathetic individuals in the congregation? Such a preacher might have done well to become a hearer for a while;—if indeed capable of receiving any corrective instruction from an example of his reverse; for there have been instances of preachers actually spoiling themselves still worse in consequence of hearing some of Mr. Hall's eloquent effusions; assuming, beyond their previous sufficiency of such graces, a vociferous declamation, a forced look of force, and a tumour of verbiage, from unaccountable failure to perceive, or to make a right use of the perception, that his sometimes impetuous delivery, ardent aspect, and occasionally magnificent diction, were all purely spontaneous from the strong excitement of the subject.

Under that excitement, when it was the greatest, he did unconsciously acquire a corresponding elation of attitude and

expression; would turn, though not with frequent change, toward the different parts of the assembly, and, as almost his only peculiarity of action, would make one step back from his position (which, however, was instantly resumed) at the last word of a climax; an action which inevitably suggested the idea of the recoil of heavy ordnance.* I mention so inconsiderable a circumstance because I think it has somewhere lately been noticed with a hinted imputation of vanity. But to the feeling of his constant hearers, the cool and hypercritical equally with the rest, it was merely one of those effects which emotion always produces in the exterior in one mode or another, and was accidentally become associated with the rising of his excitement to its highest pitch, just at the sentence which decisively clenched an argument, or gave the last strongest emphasis to an enforcement. This action never occurred but when there *was* a special emphasis in what he said.

Thus the entire possession and actuation of his mind by his subject, evident in every way, was especially so by two signs: First, that his delivery was simply and unconsciously governed by his mind. When it was particularly animated, or solemn, or pathetic, or indignant, it was such not by rule, intention, or any thought of rhetorical fitness; but in involuntary accordance with the strain of the thought and feeling. In this sense he "spake as he was moved;" and consequently nothing in his manner of delivery was either out of the right place, or *in* it by studied adjustment.†

The other indication of being totally surrendered to the

* In sermons plainly and almost exclusively exegetical, or in which bodily disorder repressed his characteristic energy, he would often keep nearly one posture, looking straight forward, during the whole service. At all times his gesture was clear of every trace of art and intention. Indeed he had scarcely anything of what is meant by gesticulation or action in the schools of oratory. It was what he never thought of for himself, and he despised its artificial exhibition in others, at least in preachers.

† I remember, at the distance of many years, with what a vivid feeling of the ludicrous he related an anecdote of a preacher, long since deceased, of some account in his day and connexion. He would, in preaching, sometimes weep, or seem to weep, when the people wondered why, as not perceiving in what he was saying any cause for such emotion in the exact places where it occurred. After his death, one of his hearers happening to inspect some of his manuscript sermons, exclaimed, "I have found the explanation: we used to wonder at the good Doctor's weeping with so

subject, and borne on by its impetus when the current became strong, was (in perfect contrast to what is described above) the rapid passing by, and passing away, of any striking sentiment or splendid image. He never detained it in view by reduplications and amplifying phrases, as if he would not let it vanish so soon; as if he were enamoured of it, and wanted his hearers to be so for his sake; as if he wished to stand a while conspicuous by its lustre upon him. It glistened or flashed a moment and was gone.

The shining points were the more readily thus hastened away, as they intimately belonged to that which was passing. They occurred not as of arbitrary insertion, but with the appropriateness of a natural relation. However unexpectedly any brilliant idea might present itself, its impression was true and immediate to the purpose. Instead of arresting and diverting the attention to itself, as a thing standing out, to be separately admired for its own sake, it fell congenially into the train, and augmented without disturbing the effect. The fine passage would, indeed, in many instances, admit of being taken apart, and would in a detached state retain much of its beauty; but its greatest virtue was in animating the whole combination of sentiments. Mr. Hall's imagination always acted in direct subservience to his intellectual design.

A seriousness of spirit and manner was an invariable characteristic of his preaching, whatever were the topic, or occasion, or place; or preceding social intercourse, or temporary mood of his feelings. As his conversation often abounded with wit, in the strictest sense of the term, with the accompaniment of humour, both frequently playing into satire, in which he was not a little formidable, it has been justly wondered that nothing of this kind appeared in his sermons. I now wish I had ventured to ask him how this happened; whether it was that he had determined, on principle, to forbid himself all strokes and sparkles of that amusing faculty, as in every case detrimental to the effect of preaching; or that no witty turns or fancies did really ever occur to him during that exercise. However the case might be, all the repeaters

little reason sometimes, as it seemed. In his sermons there is written here and there in the margins, 'Cry here;' now I verily believe the Doctor sometimes mistook the place, and that was the cause of what appeared so unaccountable."

of his witty vivacities and severities have forborne, as far as I ever heard, to report any one of them as a sentence of a sermon. No more than a single instance is within my own recollection of any thing devious on this side from his accustomed tenour; it was a most biting sarcasm at the hypocritical cant of those wealthy persons who pretend a concern for the promotion of the Christian cause, but, under the affectation of a pious trust in Providence for that promotion, take good care to hold fast all but some parsimonious driblets of their money.

The absorbing seizure of his faculties by his subject, when it was prosecuted at uninterrupted length, carried him sometimes, I suspected, into a peculiar and extraordinary state of mind for a public speaker. It appeared to me not unfrequently, that his ideas pressed into his view so much in the character of living realities, that he lost all distinct sense of the presence of the congregation; so that he had for a while no more than a general and almost unconscious recognition of them as listening to him. His look at such times was that of a person so withdrawn to something within, that he is evidently taking no notice of what his eyes appear to fall upon. In confirmation that the case was so, I remember instances in which, being asked, after the service, whether he had not been grievously annoyed by an almost incessant and most thoughtlessly unrepressed coughing in many parts of the congregation, with other offensive and more voluntary noises, which had destroyed a third part at the least of his sentences for the hearing of a great proportion of the assembly, he said he had not been at all aware there was any such annoyance. It needs not to be observed, to those who have heard him, how necessary it was rendered by the defect of clear strong sound in his voice, when not forcibly exerted, that no other sounds should interfere.

At other times, however, he was in every sense present to his auditory, and spoke to them in pointed address; especially when a hortatory application at the end made them all feel that he was earnestly desirous to instruct, impress, and persuade. I may have occasion to advert again, with a somewhat different reference, to the circumstance of his mental abstraction.

It has been observed that he had the command of ample

and various resources for illustration and proof. The departments from which he drew the least, might be the facts and philosophy of the material world. His studies had been directed with a strong and habitual preference to the regions of abstraction and metaphysics; and he furnished a fine example of the advantage which may be derived from such studies to the faculty for theological and moral discussions, by a mind at the same time too full of ardour, sentiment, and piety, to be cooled and dried into an indifference to every thing but the most disembodied and attenuated speculation. The advantage, as exemplified by him, of the practice and discipline of dealing with truth in the abstract, where a severe attention is required to apprehend it as a real subsistence, to see and grasp it, if I may so speak, in tangible forms, might be noted as twofold. First (that which has been anticipated in former remarks), the utmost precision in every thing he uttered. He could express each dictate of thought in perfect freedom from doubt whether it might not be equivocal; whether it might not be of loose import and vague direction, instead of strictly to the point; whether it might not involve some latent inconsistency within itself or in its immediate conjunction with another idea; whether it were exactly the very thing he intended. It was of complete formation in his understanding; it had its including line and limit, instead of being confused with something else. As it was once happily said by himself of Johnson, "he shone strongly on the angles of a thought." The consequence of his rigorous habits of thinking thus came with eminent value into discourse addressed and intelligible to ordinary good sense, where there was no obvious intervention of that refined speculation which was nevertheless contributing, in effect, so much to the clearness and strength of its consistence. The quality which might be called philosophic or metaphysic in the interior source, became a popular excellence in the result.

But, secondly: besides the distinctness and precision of all the particulars of thought in detail, that exercise of abstract speculation had brought him into possession and mastery of those general principles, in virtue of which these particular sentiments must have their authority. It is not at all necessary, in any ordinary course of instruction, to be continually tracing the particular back, for its verification, to the general;

but it is a great advantage to be able to do so when it *is* necessary, as it sometimes will be. He could do this; he knew from what original truths could be deduced the varieties of sentiment which the speaker utters in unqualified assertion, as not liable to be questioned. Any of them, not self-evident, he could have abstracted into a proximate principle in a generalization, and that again resting on a still deeper or ultimate one. He had seen down to the basis, and therefore was confident of the firmness of what he stood upon; unlike a man who is treading on a surface which he perceives or suspects to be hollow, and is ignorant and fearful of what there may be underneath. Or, to change the figure, he could trace the minor outermost ramifications of truth downward into the larger stems; and those larger into the main trunk and the root. This conscious ability of the preacher, or any other discourser, to sustain upon first principles what he is advancing with the freedom of unhesitating assertion and assumption, will impart an habitual assurance of safety while he is expatiating thus in what may be called the outward, free, and popular exposition of his subject.

It is presumed that this representation of the use he made, in sermons, of his power and habits of abstract speculation, may suffice to prevent a notion, in the minds of any of our readers who may seldom or never have heard him, that he was in a specific sense a philosophical or metaphysical preacher. He did often indeed (and it was a distinguishing excellence equally of his talking, preaching, and writing) point to some general principle, and briefly and plainly show how it authorized an opinion. Occasionally, in a more than usually argumentative discourse, he would draw out a more extended deduction. He would also cite from the doctrines of philosophy, with lucid application, some law of the human mind (for instance, and especially, that of association). But still it was far more a *virtual* than a formal result of his abstruser studies that pervaded his preaching.

His intimate acquaintance with many of the greatest authors, whom he had studied with a sentiment of reverence, and whose intellectual and religious wealth was largely drawn into his own capacious faculties, contributed to preclude an ostentation of originality. His sermons would make, on cultivated hearers, a general impression of something new in the sense

of being very different, by eminent superiority, from any common character of preaching; but the novelty would appear less to consist in absolute origination, than in the admirable power of selection and combination. It was not exhibited in a frequency of singularly bold prominent inventions, in the manner of the new mountains and islands sometimes suddenly thrown up on tracts of the globe; but rather in that whole construction of the performance by which the most appropriate topics, from whatever quarter, were brought into one array, were made imposing by aggregation, strong by unity of purpose, and often bright by felicitous apposition; in short, were so plastically ordered as to assume much of the character of a creation. It is probable that if his studies had been of slighter tenour, if his reading had been less, or more desultory, if his faculties had been suffered to run more loose, his discourses would have more abounded with ideas starting out, as it were singly, with an aspect like nothing ever seen before. His mental ground was cultivated too industriously and regularly for substantial produce, to leave room for those often beautiful wild flowers which spring spontaneously in a fertile half-wrought soil. His avowed indifference to poetry might be taken as one indication of a mind more adapted to converse with the substantialities of truth, than to raise phantoms of invention. Perhaps the most striking feature of his originality was seen in his talent (like the chemistry which brings a latent power into manifestation and action) of drawing from some admitted principle a hitherto unthought-of inference, which affects the whole argument of a question, and leads to a conclusion either new or by a new road.

While he availed himself in his sermons of the powers and means of reason, he constantly referred, I believe with an increased explicitness in the more advanced periods of his ministry, to Revelation as the supreme and final authority. No preacher, or writer on subjects of divinity, was ever more faithful to the principle that all doctrines professing to be Christian, must, both in their statement and proof, be founded on the Scriptures, whatever further light or corroboration they may admit from independent reason, or from matter of fact. It is understood that it cost him, at an early season of his life, a great effort, with respect to some particular opinions, to subdue his speculative disposition to such an uncompromis-

ing submission to that authority, as to renounce not only the presumptions which place themselves in contravention to the Scriptures, but all the expedients of a forced or evasive interpretation of them. But the submission became absolute and perpetual; and in this spirit he maintained through life so assiduous a practice of studying the Bible, that he acquired a remarkable facility for citing from every part of it, in the course of his preaching, the passages most pertinent for evidence or enforcement of whatever he was advancing. It would often strike the hearers that probably no texts could have been found in the whole book more exactly to the purpose. Though he studied the Scriptures critically, he was sparing of learned criticism in the pulpit; never resorted to it but when he saw a question of some importance involved in a right or wrong construction or interpretation; and then with the greatest possible brevity. In some few of the instances he might seem to rest too much of the weight of an argument on the acceptation of a single insulated expression; for he was not, from his ability to bring a copious induction of texts in proof of a doctrine, the less tenacious of any and every one which he thought could be vindicated for an assertion or implication of it by a correct interpretation.

In his choice of subjects, a prevailing desire to do good directed him most frequently to those, or to select parts and views of those, that present themselves as of chief importance on the common field of Christianity. When he took what appeared an insulated subject, of a peculiar and perhaps somewhat curious cast, he would seldom fail, while illustrating it in a manner appropriate to itself, to bring it at last, and by an unforced incidence, to coalesce with or merge in some grand generality or cardinal doctrine of Christian faith. This method contributed to maintain a consistency in the doctrine and tendency of his diversified ministrations.

He insisted with the utmost emphasis on the principle that Christianity, instead of being merely a circumstantial modification, or clearer exposition, or augmented sanction, or supplemental adjunct of religion, conceived as in its original subsistence in the relation between the Creator and a race not involved in moral evil, is an absolutely distinct and peculiar economy, appointed for a race that *is* in that disastrous con-

dition, and constituted upon the essentially altered relation, the relation between man as a depraved guilty being and his Maker. In his judgment, any theory which does not acknowledge Christianity in this express character positively rejects it; with the guilt, to him who dares this rejection, of insulting the Almighty, and the calamity of being self-doomed to meet the righteous Judge on an interdicted ground, a fatal ground, therefore, where justice will be apart from mercy. From his conviction of the importance of this principle of the peculiarity of the Christian economy, he brought continually in view the doctrines which *constitute* its peculiarity. The scheme of mediation; the Mediator's character, in the various views and lights in which it can be displayed, of dignity and humiliation, of majesty and benignity; his vicarious sacrifice for the atonement of sin; were the subjects of his very marked and habitual preference. On the last of them he enlarged in such extent and frequency, that, with the same perfect conviction as himself of its vital and transcendent importance, I sometimes thought there was hardly a due proportion yielded to the correlative subjects—to that extent and peremptoriness of the requirements of the divine law, that condition of the human nature, that actual existence and stupendous amount of guilt, which are the *cause* that there is a *necessity* for an atonement.

His practice, just noticed, of prosecuting the discussion of particular subjects, while in a manner strictly appropriate to each as a separate theme, yet also with a bearing toward an ultimate combination with some essential principle of Christianity, conduced to keep almost constantly in view the evangelical principles, those which are peculiarly characteristic of the mediatorial economy; for these were very commonly the points to which the various courses of thought running through his different sermons were made to tend, and where they fell in confluence.

His system of theological tenets (*creed* is an ill-favoured term) was strictly orthodox, on the model of what has come to be denominated Moderate Calvinism. With the other conspicuous points, the doctrine of the Trinity,* the divinity of

* An exception is to be made in this article for an opinion at one time held by him, and in one of his letters, I think, named by him *Dualism*,

Christ, the atonement, and justification by faith alone, he held the more distinctively Calvinistic doctrine of predestination; though I cannot answer for the precise terms in which he would have stated it; but I presume he would have accepted those employed in the articles of the Church of England. In preaching he very rarely made any express reference to that doctrine, and his recognition of it by implication was too indistinct for toleration from the rigidly Calvinistic hearers of any preacher not privileged by talents and public favour to bear down all censorial pretensions.

Under our total ignorance of divine decrees, our ignorance of all but the *general* purpose of the Almighty in the promulgation of the Gospel, he considered that men are to be addressed as rational beings, on subjects of which, unless they will practically renounce that property of their nature, they must apprehend the vast importance; subjects which, as well as appealing to their coolest reason, ought to be of mighty force to press on the conscience and the passions; to which it were, consequently, the last absurdity to decline summoning that reason, and arousing those passions. He was therefore exempt from all those restrictions, in respect to the mode of presenting and urging the overtures of redemption, which have been imposed on some good men of the Calvinistic faith by a concern for systematic consistency. He took the utmost liberty in this strain of inculcation; exhorting, inviting, entreating, expostulating, remonstrating; in language of nearly the same tenour as that which might be employed by an Arminian preacher, with the exception, of course, of that notion of free-will which recurs with such laborious iteration in the preaching of that order, and which was excluded from his faith equally by theological and philosophical reasons. This non-advertence in his sermons to the Calvinistic tenet, was not from any secret consciousness that the belief of it is essentially incongruous with an unrestrained freedom of inculcation; it was not that he might enjoy a licence for inconsistency through the device of keeping one or two incompatible things out of sight; but he judged that neither the doctrine itself, nor the process of reasoning to prove the belief of it consistent with

but surrendered long before the decline of his life. That opinion was that the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as a divine energy, or agency, instead of a personal subsistence.

the most unrestricted language of exhortation, could be made a profitable part of popular instruction. He deemed it authority enough for his practice, independently of all abstracted reasoning on the subject, that he had the example of the divinely inspired preachers urging the demands of the Gospel on the unbelievers and the wicked, in the most unmeasured terms of exhortation, the predestinating decrees of heaven set out of the question; and that in modern experience it is a notorious fact, that those preachers of the Calvinistic school (for one memorable example, Whitfield) who have nevertheless availed themselves of this freedom to the utmost extent, have been far beyond all comparison more successful in effecting the great object of preaching, than those who have, somewhat presumptuously, charged themselves with so much responsibility respecting the unknown determination of the Almighty, that they must not call men indiscriminately to faith and repentance lest they should contravene his sovereign purposes—I might say, rather, forfeit the dignity of coinciding with them.

Perhaps it would not have been expected from Mr. Hall's great capacity, that he should be habitually indisposed to dwell or expatiate long near the borders of the remoter, darker tracts of the regions of religious contemplation; such, however, appears to have been the fact. If the cause were inquired, undoubtedly one thing that withheld or withdrew him was a consideration of usefulness, a preference for what was most adapted to be beneficial to his own religious discipline and to the best interests of others. He was amply informed and warned, by his knowledge of the history of philosophy and theology, of the mischiefs of a restless, presumptuous, interminable speculation, a projection of thought, beyond the limits of ascertainable truth. But there was a cause more radical in his mental constitution. That constitution was not predominantly either imaginative or contemplative; it was *intellectual*, in the strictest sense; in the (perhaps arbitrary) sense, that the matter of his speculations must be what he could distinctly understand, what he could survey in such form and order as to admit of propositions and reasons; so that the speculative process lost its interest with him if carried into a direction, or if exceeding the limit, where it could no longer be subjected to the methods of proof; in other words, where

it ceased to comprehend and reason, and turned into conjecture, sentiment, and fancy. He seemed to have no ambition to stretch out his intellectual domain to an extent which he could not occupy and traverse, with some certainty of his movements and measurements. His sphere was very wide, expanded to one circle beyond another, at each of which in succession he left other men behind him, arrested by the impassable line; but he was willing to perceive, and even desirous to verify, his own ultimate boundary; and when he came to the barrier where it was signified to him, "Thus far, and no further," he stopped, with apparently much less of an impulse than might have been expected in so strong a spirit, to seek an outlet, and attempt an irruption into the dubious realms beyond.

With a mind so constituted and governed, he was less given than many other men of genius have been to those visionary modes of thought; those musings exempt from all regulation; that impatience of aspiration to reach the vast and remote; that fascination of the mysterious, captivating by the very circumstance of eluding; that fearful adventuring on the dark, the unknown, the awful; "those thoughts that wander through eternity," which have often been at once the luxury and the pain of imaginative and highly endowed spirits, discontented with their assigned lot in this tenebrious world. No doubt, in his case, piety would have interfered to restrain such impatience of curiosity, or audacity of ambitious thinking, or indignant strife against the confines of our present allotment, as would have risen to a spirit of insubordination to the divine appointment. And possibly there were times when this interference was required; but still the structure of his faculties, and the manner of employing them to which it determined him, contributed much to exempt him from that passion to go beyond the mortal sphere which would irreligiously murmur at the limitation. His acquiescence did not seem at least to cost him a strong effort of repression.

This distinction of his intellectual character was obvious in his preaching. He was eminently successful on subjects of an elevated order, which he would expand and illustrate in a manner which sustained them to the high level of their dignity. This carried him near some point of the border of

that awful darkness which encompasses, on all sides, our little glimmering field of knowledge; and then it might be seen how aware he was of his approach, how cautiously, or shall I say instinctively? he was held aloof, how sure not to abandon the ground of evidence, by a hazardous incursion of conjecture or imagination into the unknown. He would indicate how near, and in what direction, lay the shaded frontier; but dared not, did not seem even tempted, to invade its "majesty of darkness."

This procedure, in whatever proportion owing to his intellectual temperament, or to the ascendancy of religion, will be pronounced wise for a *general* practice. If, however, he could have allowed himself in some degree of exception, it would have been gratifying to a portion of his hearers. There are certain mysterious phenomena in the moral economy of our world, which compel, and will not release, the attention of a thoughtful mind, especially if of a gloomy constitutional tendency. Wherever it turns, it still encounters their portentous aspect; often feels arrested and fixed by them as under some potent spell; making an effort, still renewed and still unavailing, to escape from the appalling presence of the vision. Now it was conceived, that a strenuous deliberate exertion of a power of thought like his, after he had been so deeply conversant with important and difficult speculations, might perhaps have contributed something to alleviate this oppression. Not, of course, that it should be dreamed that his, or any still stronger human intelligence, should be able to penetrate with light, the black clouds which overshadow our system. But it was imagined possible for such force of reason to impart somewhat of an extenuating quality to the *medium* through which they are beheld, and through which they might then be beheld with a less painful and total prostration of spirit. It might have been an invaluable service, it was thought, if his whole strength and resources had been applied to display comprehensively the nature, the extent, the solidity, of the ground on which faith may rest with a firm confidence in the goodness of the sovereign Governor, notwithstanding all the strange and awful phenomena of our economy.*

* It may be mentioned, in further explanation of the indisposition noted above, that in spite of the long and often severe persecution of

This disinclination to adventure into the twilight of speculation was shown in respect to subjects of less formidable mystery, of solemn indeed, but rather attractive than overawing, character. For instance, the mode, the condition, of that conscious existence after death, of which, as a fact, he was so zealous an asserter against the dreary dogma which consigns the soul to insensibility in the separate state; if indeed it *be* any existent state of an intelligence when all we know of its attributes is abolished. It would have been gratifying, and might have been beneficial for serious impression, to see some gleams of his vigorous thought thrown upon the border of that scene of our destiny, so obscure, but at the same time so near, and of transcendent interest; to see the reserved and scattered intimations of the sacred oracles brought into combination, and attempted to be reduced to something approaching to the form of a theory; to see how far any conjectural imaginations could be accompanied by reasons from analogy, and any other principle of probability; with a citation, perhaps, of certain of the least arbitrary and fanciful of the visions of other inquisitive speculators, commented on as he would have commented. But he did not appear to partake of the intense curiosity with which the inquiries and poetical musings of some pious men have been carried into the subject. He seemed, beyond what might have been expected in relation to a matter which lies across the whole breadth of our prospect, and so closely at hand, content to let it remain a *terra incognita* till the hour that puts an end to conjecture. It will be understood that this is mentioned, not with any meaning of animadversion, but as exemplifying that peculiarity of his mental character by which he appeared disinclined to pursue any inquiries beyond the point where substantial evidence fails. The regret of some of his hearers was, that he should not oftener be willing to exert his whole strength to try whether that point be really fixed where it appears and is assumed to

bodily pain, his temperament was cheerful and buoyant. He had a remarkable facility of finding or making sources and occasions of pleasurable feeling, and averting his mind from gloomy subjects: insomuch that he appeared to be, even on the mere strength of this temperament, much less subject than might have been expected of so enlarged a capacity of thought, to be invaded by the dark and fearful forms which those subjects can assume.

be. They would have been gratified to see him undertaking sometimes the discussion of subjects, which they would have deprecated any attempt upon by men of ordinary ability. While so superior a mental engine, if I may be allowed the expression, was in their hands, they wished they could *make the most* of its powers.

I have deferred to the last some additional observations, which I shall attempt with considerable difficulty: partly from a doubt whether I may be able to render them plainly intelligible; and partly from apprehension that they may not please some of those who most admired Mr. Hall,—of whose talents, however, no man's admiration was higher than mine.

The general purport of what I would say is this: that while his preaching was superlatively excellent in many of its qualities, it was not, from a defect in certain important ones, the best adapted for salutary efficacy. A short indication of what I would allege would be, that it was too general and theoretic, neglectful too often of the required *conditions of application*, the distinctions, exceptions, qualifications; in other words, of the casuistry in which every subject of a practical nature is involved; that it presented things too much in unbroken breadth and mass; that it was apt to exceed, in the most eloquent parts, the allowed licence of exaggerations; that it was not kept in due relation to the realities of life; that, while it was most excellent in the discrimination of topics, sentiments, arguments, it did not discriminate and individualize human characters; that therefore it did not maintain an intimate commerce with the actual condition of the hearers.

It were superfluous to repeat how pre-eminently he displayed, in the perspicuous and convincing statement, development, and confirmation of truth, the primary excellence of preaching, as it is of all instruction; or how earnestly the practical interest of the doctrine, in its *general* bearing, at least, was often enforced toward the conclusion of his sermons. The defect, which, nevertheless, I am wishing to mark as not excluded by such rare merit, was, that (as a general fact, and with exceptions) his preaching did not bring and keep the people under a closely *disciplinary* process. It allowed them too much of the privilege of the spectators of a fine and well ordered series of representation, of such a nature that they can

look on at ease from any similar disturbance to that of the king in Hamlet, at the sight of the acted garden scene.

A consideration of the whole design of preaching might suggest something approaching to a model of what would seem the most probably calculated to attain its several ends, in combination to one grand purpose. We may regard the preacher as holding a kind of comprehensive jurisdiction over the spiritual and moral condition of the congregation, who are a mingled assemblage of all varieties of that condition. Should not then the best mode of ministration, for beneficial effect, be that which applies itself to this condition, not only either generally in the mass, or as viewed in the two divisions of religious and irreligious, but also with a special recognition of those varieties?

There needs not here be said so self-evident a thing as that the great primary truths, forming, if I may express it so, *the constitution* of religion, should be carefully and amply set forth; that, in a word, the *theory* of Christianity as a whole, and in its principal branches, should be kept conspicuous in the people's view. But while the principles of which the Christian faith consists are to be often stated and constantly recognised, as the general ground-work of all that belongs to religion, what a large account there is of more special matters on which, and on each of which, it is most important to call men's reason and conscience into exercise. There are the various causes, distinguishable and assignable ones, which frustrate the exhibition of religious truth, and may be so commented on as to show *how* they frustrate it. There is the sad catalogue of the perversities and deceits of the heart; there are the distortions and presumptions of prejudice; the principles which, in disguised form perhaps, and afraid of audacious avowal, but of malignant essence, re-act against the divine authority; the subterfuges of insincerity; the various ways in which men evade conviction, falsify in effect the truth to which they assent in terms, or delude themselves in their estimates of their own spirit and conduct. There is the estrangement from reflection, the extreme reluctance to honest self-examination. There is also, in the majority of any large congregation, many of those who make a direct profession of personal religion not excepted, an indistinct apprehension, and a lax application, of the principles and rules of Christian

morality. These last, together with the state of men's notions and habits in relation to them, are within the province of the religious instructor; unless the universally, cogently, and even minutely perceptive character of revelation be a grand impertinence.

It is of the utmost importance that things like these should occupy a large space in the ministration. They claim to be made the subject of the preacher's best exertion, to show what they are, by illustrations verified upon the actual state of human beings, and how they interfere with religion in all its doctrines and applications. Any one of these here noted comprehends a whole class of particulars, important enough to be, each of them separately, a matter of the most useful discussion for the longest sermon. And if this be true, the majority of the evangelical teachers of our congregations seem very far from being aware (in respect especially to what belongs to the moral department of the great Christian school) of the extent of either the resources or the duties of their office.

But besides the propriety of discoursing on such things formally and at large, there is a valuable use to be made of them in a secondary and more incidental way, by adverting to them, any of them, as the case may suggest, in short and pointed reference, when any lesson of the religious discipline can by means of them be more strongly fastened on men's mind; on minds which will play loose from its hold if such expedients be not employed to strike and grasp them. Through whatever subject (except the most exclusively speculative) the Christian instructor can direct his course, considerations relating to such matters are, some or other of them, near at hand, to admonish him of something which is to be taken account of, or he is debarred from obtaining possession of the inner man. And therefore it would be well that, instead of passing by these considerations unnoticed, and prosecuting with exclusive attention the pure *rationale* of his subject, he should admit them to interfere with his progress, should implicate such of them as lie nearest to his track with the train of his observations; sometimes with a short interruption and suspension of that train, in order to take in and insist on an accessory consideration which may turn the subject with a more special pointedness on the hearers than would be done

by its strictly regular prosecution. He might thus, without losing sight of the *general* objects of his discourse, give it a particularity, a pressure at critical points, a distinctness of arrest on the attention and conscience.

Now Mr. Hall had, both by the cast of his mind and his addiction to prolonged speculative studies, an inaptitude to such a manner of preaching. His subject took the form of an intellectual theme, homogeneous, continuous, and nowhere allowing a diversion from its order, or a breaking up among its topics to turn any of them for a few moments to a peculiar and insulated use; or admitting the intervention of anything which would bring the progress to a stand. The channel of his thoughts was so straight on, and the current so full and rapid, that there could be no refluxes and eddies. He entered on his subject with a clear prospect over it to the end; the interest, to himself, of his movement in prosecution of it, was in throwing his mind still forward on the next succeeding part, with a propulsion augmented by each as he passed through it; and he would have been impatient of anything that should check or turn aside his career. He could not remit and draw in, to stay awhile, so to speak, with some one important observation, to give it individually an aggravated stress, to kindle it into an intense light, deliberately held close to the minds before him, penetrating to the recesses as a trial of the spirit, revealing unsuspected, or but slightly suspected, qualities in the feelings, the motives, the habits; and indicating unthought-of relations between these and the principles of Christianity, the rules of duty, or the conditions of safety. Still pressing vigorously onward, he could not make a pause to revert unexpectedly on what he had just said; and by an appeal to the hearers for its truth, or by a brief strong inference from it, render it more impressive than it could be as hastily passing away. He could not abate his movement so as to address them with a pointed interrogation, solemn or familar in a manner as if waiting for a reply; thus breaking in upon any tendency there might be to their yielding themselves to be carried along in a pleasing reverie of admiration and vague assent; drawing them into something like a mental dialogue with him on the point, and awaking them to reflect whether they should make, or were making, any application of it to themselves. That extraordinary degree of withdrawment from

recognition of the local scene, when his mind was in its full race, which has been noticed before rather as a circumstance of manner than as affecting the character of his preaching, contributed much to what is here attempted to be described. He did feel, I repeat, a benevolent interest for the congregation, as a *general* sentiment, and at times it would manifest itself expressly and even pathetically; but I still deem it a fact, that during a large proportion of his public exercise, and especially in the seasons of highest excitement, *the subject itself*, in its own absorbing possession of him, was the grand interest. It was by *that* that he was filled, elated, and borne along, with no more than a very general consciousness of being in communication with an auditory. The train of his thoughts, therefore, swept on at a certain altitude, as it were, in the air, rather than proceeded on a level and in contact with the people, in a series of arresting inculcations and inquisitions.

I have said that he did not *individualize* human characters. While he had a deep insight into the structure of human nature as a species, his preaching would sometimes have suggested the remark that was made on a certain philosopher, that "he understood *man*, but not *men*"—I say his *preaching;* for a different apprehension was received from his conversation. He had been acquainted less or more with a very extensive variety of persons, including most of the differences seen in society; had a remarkably exact remembrance of them; and showed, by his characteristic descriptions and anecdotes, that he was not a superficial, though he was not a studiously intentional, observer. At all times he was interested by facts, witnessed or related, which exemplified a common property, or a peculiar modification, of this strange nature of ours. It was therefore a cause of wonder, notwithstanding all that was so apparent of his habits of abstraction and generalization, that so many forms of the good and evil of humanity, accumulated within the ample magazine of his materials, should not be brought into service, divested, of course, of the peculiarities that would betray individual portraiture, and a little idealized into representatives of classes, but still of such genuine living feature, that the people might recognise them as things in actual existence. Forms of character thus discriminately shaped from matter of fact, would stand forth exposing what human nature is, not merely

as a *general* subject for religious and moral treatment, but also in those special modifications to which the discipline should be applied. It may then be applied with a peculiar, and, in the hands of an able man, a striking appropriateness; it will be seen to be fitted to the part: and there can be no question whether its force and probable efficacy will be much in proportion to this evidently specific pertinence. By this practice he who is desirous that truth may strike, stands much nearer to his mark, leaving less room for the shaft to pass harmlessly by in a slanting direction, than if he took a general aim from a distance. Let the blended mass of human character be thus resolved into classes, not so small certainly that the address, in order to be appropriate to each, must be frittered into minute and almost trifling particulars, yet so circumscribed that it may bear on each in one definite manner, and many persons will be made to find their own place, and find themselves brought to account, who would remain quite at their ease under a theoretic generality in the administration of the religious and moral jurisdiction; who might even approve and applaud the very lecture by which they were arraigned and condemned, in perfect impunity from any whisper of the admonition, "Thou art the man." It was to be regretted that the singularly compact conformation, and the speculative and abstract propensity, of Mr. Hall's mind, should so much have precluded his great talents and excellent purpose from this resource for augmenting the efficacy of preaching. It might be anticipated from the nature of the case, and it was verified by observation, that too many of the attendants witnessed some of the brightest displays rather with the feeling of looking at a fine picture than of being confronted by a faithful mirror; and went away equally pleased with a preacher that was so admirable, and with themselves for having the intelligence and taste to admire him.*

* A little circumstance, told me a day or two after his last sermon, which was considered of signal intellectual power, and which I have always regretted that I was prevented hearing, may not improperly be mentioned as somewhat in point to what is attempted in these paragraphs. The subject was the sin and absurdity of covetousness. After the service, one of the hearers observed to another, "An admirable sermon; yet why was *such* a sermon preached? For probably not one person in the congregation, though it is not wanting in examples of the vice in question,

There was cause for observation on his manner of placing in contrast the two great divisions, the righteous and the wicked, Christians and men of the world. There should be some essential test of the difference; but then what to do with all those appearances among the professedly better class, which betray so much likeness, after all, to the worse? Nothing can be more perplexing to a thoughtful beholder of men as they are, who, in disregard of all system, *must* take these signs for what they plainly import; and what they plainly import is, that whatever be the essentially distinguishing principle of the separation, there are, in numbers whom he may not in a judgment of charity pronounce to be no Christians, many grievous and habitual approximations to those who confessedly are none. At times, the whole subject will almost assume under his view, the appearance of an affair of *gradation*, from the maximum on one side, and the minimum on the other, divided by no wide interval at the point of approach. If he be a public teacher of religion, and in that capacity under a solemn responsibility for the estimates to be entertained of the Christian character, and of themselves, by his hearers, he will have a severe exercise for his caution and discrimination. He may

would take the discourse as at all applicable to himself." The preacher had employed his whole force on the love of money *as a pure and absolute principle.* The person who made the remark meant to say that hardly any one will acknowledge to be, or indeed is *conscious* of being, actuated by this pure absolute principle, however tenacious of his money, or insatiably grasping at more. No: the passion enslaves and befools him under secondary and more plausible forms. He wishes to have the means of setting his family advantageously forward in the world; he says so, and thinks so, even though possibly unwilling to do anything for them as yet. It is desirable to have the means of maintaining a respectable station in society. It is gratifying to be looked up to with the deference universally shown to wealth. Perhaps the man has had experience of straitened circumstances in early life, and cannot make too sure against its recurrence. There is much liability to hazard and losses, and it is prudent to be well provided. It would be a miserable thing to suffer penury in old age. Now, an invective against the love of money, to be practically useful, would seize and expose it in those modes of its operation, under which it hides or palliates its true quality, and beguiles out of all self-suspicion the most desperate idolator of Mammon. A lecture on covetousness, which should concentrate its whole rebuke on the love of money taken abstractedly, might even do mischief; for every hearer who could say he did not *so* love money, would confidently infer that therefore he was not guilty of covetousness.

overlook, if he will, the unhappy mixture and competition of evil with the good in the better division of actual human characters; and indulge himself in the pleasure of constructing and setting up an image, not like that visionary one, from whose golden head there was a deterioration of materials downward to the baseness of clay, but wholly of gold, the *ideal* of all the Christian graces and virtues assembled in harmony and perfection. But to what end? Is it that the people, when they recover themselves to consideration, may, with grief on the part of the pious and benevolent, and with malignant pleasure on the part of the profane, adjudge the greater proportion of those who have a general acceptance as religious persons, not to be truly such? Or is it, that persons sincerely intent on religion, actuated in some considerable degree by its spirit, but painfully conscious of a vast disparity to the pattern so splendidly exhibited, should therefore resign themselves to despondency? Or what else? What else?—unless, after looking up to this consummate pattern, the teacher, taking a descending track of thought, shall exert his best judgment to show, through several degrees cautiously followed downward, how the genuine principle may exist where there is much at variance with it; insisting at each grade, on the manner in which it is essential for that principle to act, in proof that it is really there notwithstanding the offensive things that keep their place with it; and solemnly protesting against the fatal propensity to find a ground of safety at the last lowest point at which it may be hoped that the principle may still be not absolutely incompatible with that with which it is inconsistent.

It appeared a serious defect in Mr. Hall's preaching, that he practically took on him too little of this responsibility. In temporary oblivion of the rule that theoretic description should keep existing fact so much in view that a right adjustment may be made between them, he would expatiate in eloquent latitude on the Christian character, bright and "full-orbed" in all its perfections, of contempt of the world, victory over temptation, elevated devotion, assimilation to the divine image, zeal for the divine glory, triumphant faith, expansive charity, sanctity of life; without an intimation, at the time or afterwards, that all this, so sublime if it were realized, so obligatory as the attainment toward which a Christian should

be, at whatever distance, aspiring, is yet unhappily to be subjected, on behalf of our poor nature, to a cautious discussion of modifications and degrees; especially when the anxious question comes to be, *What deficiencies prove a man to be no Christian?*

Now a hearer, left to some coolness of thought, was tempted to say to himself, What do the people think of this? —if indeed they *do* think, if they be not beguiled away from reflection. How does it strike the many persons in this large assembly, who, respectable perhaps as men of the world, make no pretension to what is meant by personal religion; and how those others who despise or hate it, and would hardly endure to hear any thing about it but for the sake of the eloquence which they think might have been more worthily employed?* Are they, in imagination, carrying out this brilliant picture for test, or contrast, into the real world, where they have observed and descried, with no little vigilance, the culpable tempers, habits, and proceedings, the inconsistencies, weaknesses, and errors, of many whom the preacher himself would be the last man to pronounce altogether destitute of piety? But if they do make this invidious use of the description, will they not with pernicious self-complacency assume, not exactly, perhaps, that the whole affair is altogether a fable, but that, unless there be super-emphatically "few that be saved," that if these sadly defective Christians may nevertheless be finally safe, there must, after all, be a standard so much more accommodating to human nature as it is, than that implied in the preacher's representation, as to allow a confidence that they are not even themselves in any formidable danger; since they only share the faults, they will say, and without making the high pretensions, of these professed Christians. Why *let* them go off with this mischievous assumption?

And how does it strike the persons here, who stand in the recognized accepted class of the religious? Have they, while hearing this elevated strain, any such thing as reflection on

* I recollect the instance of a gentleman expressing, at the conclusion of the public service, the highest admiration of the preacher, and adding, "What a pity Mr. Hall's great talents had not been destined to the Bar or the House of Commons, where he would have made so capital a figure!"

themselves? Is their conscience lulled by what might seem adapted in all reason to alarm it? Have they no secret monition—are the very serpents themselves that infest a corrupt and but imperfectly renovated nature, so charmed into stillness that there is no consciousness—of many things which this grand exemplar shines but to expose and condemn? What! is there no internal voice to accuse them, any of them, of such things as a proneness to an excessive love of the world, as coldness of devotion, reluctance of duty, insubordination to the divine will, lapses into a besetting sin, the indulgence of evil tempers, selfish competition with fellow-mortals, frequent forgetfulness of hereafter? If there be not; if their admiration of the beautiful image of Christian excellence in the abstract carry them away from all consciousness of what is unlike it in themselves, it is quite time to come down to a mode of address that shall turn their thoughts homeward, and bring them into a consideration of what they are virtually doing in admiring such a model; shall excite them to reflect, if they so admire one and another feature of it, what they should think of this and the other characteristic where the correspondence is to be sought in their own actual condition. It would be well to bring them to the questions of, What is the difference? and, Why such a difference? and What would be the right feeling under the self-conviction of such a difference? Let them not be suffered to regard this bright model merely as the ideal representation of something so unattainable on earth, that they are absolved from any serious consideration whether, and how, they have formed a judgment of what *is* attainable and *must* be attained; what they are really wishing to attain; what they think they *have* attained; why it is no more; what are the conscious evils yet unsubdued; what they deem the proportion of those evils to be to the better part; how they measure that proportion, and ascertain the predominance of the good; and whether they be disposed to content themselves with that state of the case.

But if, on the contrary, this bright exhibition of the Christian character, instead of playing harmlessly over them like an aurora borealis, has sent its rays deeply into their soul, and is bringing more plainly to their own view the evils lurking there, the sinful propensities, the spiritual dis-

orders of whatever class, with the addition of the moral and practical ones resulting externally, in what manner are they adjusting that very serious contrast, so as to maintain a confidence that, nevertheless, on the whole the case is safe? No doubt it must be, by making very large allowances for the sad imperfection of our nature. But would it not be well for the Christian instructor to endeavour to take that somewhat hazardous process out of the hands of their self-love, by interfering himself in the adjudication of what may be conceded to a fallen nature, on such conditions as shall not essentially invalidate the demands of religion.

As the last observation I would take the liberty to make, I may note the same prevailing inadvertence to the realities of life in Mr. Hall's manner of representing the *happiness* conferred by religion; premising, as a thing somewhat of a piece with this particular, that he would sometimes indulge in language hardly consonant to either theory or experience in what it seemed to imply of the *facility* of entering, by a transition of spirit and action, on the Christian life. I will confess he did appear to me, in reference to this matter, to lose sight too much, when he surrendered himself to the animated current of his sentiments, of the desperate and obstinate alienation of the human soul from its Creator. It was not that he did not most fully believe this to be the condition of our nature, on the evidence of both Scripture and notorious fact; or that he did not hold, according to the strictest Calvinistic construction, the doctrine of a necessity of a special divine agency for men's conversion to a new spiritual state; but that, when his mind was kindled at the attraction and glories of religion, he would forget, for the time, both how lost are those attractions on a corrupt nature, and what a dreadful combination of influences there is to retain it in its aversion.

But, to revert to the specific topic, the representation of the *happiness* of the Christian character. He would describe, with a prolonged effusion of beautiful sentiment and language, the delightful confidence in the divine favour, the harmony and communion of the pious spirit with its God and Saviour, the independence on sublunary things, the superiority to the cares and distractions of life, the serenity of trust in Providence under the greatest trials or most menacing presages, the cordial invariable acquiescence in

the divine dispensations, the victory over the fear of death, the unclouded prospect into eternity. Now it needs not be said that such *would* be the felicities of a condition exalted to the absolute perfection of Christianity; or that the religious instructor should point to these elevations as the eminence toward which it is the tendency of religion to carry upward the human spirit, and toward which a Christian is to aspire, however remote his utmost ascent may be from reaching it. He may do well to cite from the memorials of good men, some of the examples most remarkably approaching to a practical evidence, that such is the felicity which it is in the nature of religion to impart. And he will have at once to reprove those who, regarding such a privileged existence as something like a visionary scene suspended in the sky, rather than a state partially attainable by mortals, are resting with a dull acquiescence in a poverty of religious enjoyment; and to console and animate those whose earnest aspirations are repressed by the consciousness how little they attain. But if, in describing the happiness of a Christian, he take it at its highest degree, to which the experience of the most devout men has risen only at some favoured seasons (at least if they had much to do with the world's concerns), and spread out the representation in imagery, all formed of the finest elements, omitting to advert in the most express manner as an indispensable part of his business, to the actual state of good men, so beset and overrun with things which deny them to be so happy, it would be inevitable for the supposed cool-minded hearer to have his thoughts once more looking off to matters of fact. He would say to himself, "It may be taken as certain, that many among the sincere Christians in this assembly are in circumstances which must make them listen to this unqualified representation with pain or with incredulity. Some of them are harassed, without the possibility of escape, by the state of their worldly affairs; perhaps oppressed by disasters under which their fortitude shrinks, or seeing the approach of such as no prudence or effort can avail to prevent; anxiously awaiting a critical turn of events; vexed beyond the patience of Job by the untowardness, selfishness, or dishonesty encountered in their transactions. Some are enduring the cares and hardships of poverty; and thinking how much more easy is

the eloquent inculcation, than the reduction to practice, of the precept to 'take no thought for the morrow.' Some are distressed by bad dispositions among their nearest kindred; perhaps by anticipations, grievous in proportion to their piety, of the conduct and ultimate destiny of their children. Some may have come here for an hour who are fixed in the sad situation of witnessing the slow but certain progress of persons, whose life is on all accounts most important to them, in a descent toward the grave. Some are experiencing, while strenuously maintaining, a severe conflict between the good and evil in their own minds. Some may be in mortifying recollection of lapses into which they have been betrayed. Some are of melancholic temperament; and while striving to keep hold of their faith and hope, are apt to see whatever concerns their welfare in an unfavourable view in every direction, and especially in looking forward to death. Some, of contemplative disposition, are often oppressed, even to a degree of danger to their piety, by the gloom which involves the economy of the world, where moral evil has been predominant through all the course of time. In short, it is probable that the much larger proportion of the religious persons now present are in no condition to allow a possibility of their yielding themselves in sympathy with the spirit of this celebration of the happiness of religion. Would it not, then, be a more useful manner of illustrating this subject, to carry it into a trial on the actual circumstances of the Christian life; to place it, with appropriate discriminations, by the side of the real situations of good men; to show that, notwithstanding all, religion *can* insure a *preponderance* of happiness; to demonstrate *how* it can do so; to point out the most efficacious means, in each case respectively, and urge their diligent use; to suggest consolations for deficient success, with a note of admonition respecting such of its causes as require that reproof be mixed with encouragement? all the while keeping in view that condition of our existence on earth, which renders it inevitable that the happiness created even by religion, for the men most faithfully devoted to it, should not be otherwise than greatly incomplete?"

These observations have grown to a length beyond my

intention or expectation; and I should have been better pleased if I could have felt assured, that a far less protracted criticism might suffice for an intelligible description of the nature and operation of certain things, in the character of Mr. Hall's ministration, which I had presumed to think not adapted, in the proportion of its eminent intellectual superiority, to practical effect.

It is not to be exacted of the greatest talents that they have an equal aptitude to two widely different modes of operation. Nor is any invidious comparison to be made between the respective merits of excelling in the one and in the other. But, indeed, it were impossible to make any comparative estimate that *should* be invidious to Mr. Hall, if the question were of intellect, considered *purely as a general element of strength.* To attain high excellence in the manner of preaching which I have indicated as what might be a more useful one than his, though it require a clear-sighted faculty disciplined in vigilant and various exercise, is within the competence of a mind of much more limited energy and reach than Mr. Hall's power and range of speculative thought. At the same time it is not to be denied, that such a mode of conducting the ministration, whatever were the talents employed, were they even of the highest order, would demand a much more laborious and complicated process than it cost our great preacher to produce his luminous expositions of Christian doctrine, with those eloquent, but too general, practical applications into which the discussion changed toward the close. Indeed, there is reason to believe that, besides the circumstances which I have noted as indisposing and partly unfitting him to adapt his preaching discriminatively to the states and characters of men as they are, another preventing cause was a repugnance to the kind and degree of labour required in such an operation. For some passages found in his writings appear to prove that his conception of the most effective manner of preaching was very considerably different from his general practice.* I repeat, his *general*

* Several paragraphs might be cited from his sermon on the 'Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister.' I will transcribe two or three sentences.

"The epidemic malady of our nature assumes so many shapes, and

practice; for it would be wrong to dismiss these comments without observing that he did, sometimes, discuss and illustrate a topic in a special and continued application to circumstances in the plain reality of men's condition. And when he did so it was with striking and valuable effect. I shall, for instance, never forget the admiration with which I heard a sermon, chiefly addressed to the young, from the text, "For every

"appears under such a variety of symptoms, that these may be considered "as so many distinct diseases, which demand a proportionate variety in "the method of treatment. . . . . Without descending to such a minute "specification of circumstances as shall make our addresses personal, they "ought unquestionably to be characteristic; that the conscience of the "audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every "individual know where to class himself. The preacher who aims at "doing good, will endeavour, above all things, to insulate his hearers, to "place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by "losing himself in the crowd. . . . . It is thus the Christian Minister "should endeavour to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes "of every one of his hearers on himself."

To the same effect, there are several pages of advice to preachers, in the 'Fragment on Village Preaching.' The value of the whole section will be but partially apprehended from the following extracts.

"A notion prevails among some, that to preach the Gospel includes "nothing more than a recital or recapitulation of the peculiar doctrines "of Christianity. If these are firmly believed and zealously embraced, "they are ready to believe the work is done, and that all the virtues of the "Christian character will follow by necessary consequence. Hence they "satisfy themselves with recommending holiness in general terms, without "entering into its particular duties; and this in such a manner as rather "to predict it as the result of certain opinions, than to enforce it on the "ground of moral obligation. . . . . The conscience is not likely to be "touched by general declamations on the evil of sin and the beauty of "holiness, without delineation of character. . . . . He must know little of "human nature who perceives not the callousness of the human heart, and "the perfect indifference with which it can contemplate the most alarming "truths when they are presented in a general abstract form. It is not in "this way that religious instruction can be made permanently interesting. "It is when particular vices are displayed as they appear in real life, "when the arts of self-deception are detected, and the vain excuses by "which a sinner palliates his guilt, evades the conviction of conscience, and "secures a delusive tranquillity: in a word, it is when the heart is forced "to see in itself the original of what is described by the apostle; and, "perceiving that the secrets of his heart are made manifest, he falls down, "and confesses that God is among us of a truth. The reproof which "awakened David from his guilty slumber, and made him weep and "tremble, turned not on the general evil of sin, but on the peculiar cir- "cumstances of aggravation, attending that which he had committed."

thing there is a time." Nothing could exceed the accuracy of delineation and the felicitous management of language with which he marked the circumstances, conjectures, and temptations of real life; the specific interests, duties, dangers, vices; the consequences in futurity of early wisdom or folly; and the inseparable relation of every temporal and moral interest to religion; with an inculcation of which, conceived in faithful appropriateness to the preceding topics, he closed in an effusion of what merited to be irresistible pathos.* Sermons of a tenour to class them with this were heard at intervals, not so wide but that the number might be somewhat considerable within the space of two or three years. It should be observed, however, that their construction was still not wholly diverse from his general manner. The style of address was not marked by rises and falls; did not alternate between familiarity and magisterial dignity; was not modified by varying impulses into a strain which, as was said of Chatham's eloquence, was of every kind by turns. It was sustained, unintermitted, of unrelaxing gravity, in one order of language, and after a short progress from the commencement, constantly rapid in delivery. But still those sermons were cast in the best imaginable compromise between, on the one hand, the theoretic speculation and high-pitched rhetoric to which he was addicted, and, on the other, that recognition of what men actually are in situation and character, to which his mind did not so easily descend. They were the sermons which the serious and intelligent hearers regretted that people of every class, in many times the number of the actual congregation, should not have the benefit of hearing; and which it is now their deep and unavailing regret that he could not be induced to render a lasting, I might say a perennial, source of utility to the public.

I cannot be aware whether the opinions, or feelings less definite than opinions, of readers who have had the advantage of hearing Mr. Hall, will coincide with the observations ventured in these latter pages. Those who have heard him but

* One of the reported sermons in the sixth volume of his works, that on the 'Love of God,' is a remarkable example of specific illustration pointedly applied.

very occasionally, will be incompetent judges of their propriety. I remember that at a time very long since, when I had not heard more perhaps than three or four of his sermons, I did not apprehend the justness, or, indeed, very clearly the import, of a remark on that characteristic of his preaching which I have attempted to describe, when made to me by his warm friend, and most animated admirer, Dr. Ryland; who said that Mr. Hall's preaching had, with an excellence in some respects unrivalled, the fault of being *too general*, and he contrasted it with that of Mr. Hall's father, who had erred on the side of a too minute particularity. But whether these strictures be admitted or questioned, I will confidently take credit with every candid reader for having, as in the character of historian, and disclaiming the futile office of panegyrist, deliberately aimed at a faithful description of this memorable preacher, as he appeared during that latter period of his public ministrations, to which my opportunity of frequent attendance on them has unfortunately been confined.

I can hardly think it should be necessary to protest against such a misunderstanding of these latter pages as should take them to imply that Mr. Hall's preaching was not eminently useful, notwithstanding those qualities of it which tended to prevent its being so in full proportion to the mighty force of mind which it displayed. Its beneficial effect is testified by the experience of a multitude of persons, of various orders of character. Intelligent, cultivated, and inquiring young persons, some of them favourably inclined to religion, but repelled by the uncouth phraseology and the meanness and trite common-place illustration in which they had unfortunately seen it presented; some of them under temptations to scepticism and others to a rejection of some essential principle of Christianity, were attracted and arrested by a lucid and convincing exhibition of divine truth. Men of literature and talents, and men of the world who were not utterly abandoned to impiety and profligacy, beheld religion set forth with a vigour and a lustre, and with an earnest sincerity infinitely foreign to all mere *professional* display, which once more showed religion worthy to command, and fitted to elevate the most powerful minds; which augmented the zeal of the faithful among those superior spirits, and sometimes constrained the others to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Men of

sectarian spirit were cheated of a portion of their bigotry, or forced into a consciousness that they ought to be ashamed of it. And, as a good of a more diffusive kind, numbers of people of the common order were held under a habitual impression of the importance of religion; and the enumeration would, I believe, be very considerable, if it could be made, of individuals indebted to his ministry for those effectual convictions which have resulted in their devotement to God, and their happiness in life and death.

It is very possible that the latter part of these observations may be deemed erroneous or exaggerated by some persons, on a mere general presumption that in such pre-eminent excellence, so universally acknowledged, there *could* not be any considerable defects. But at all events, and whatever the just exception may be to an unqualified eulogy, it is exactly by those whose discernment the least permitted them to be undiscriminating in their admiration, that the deepest regret is felt for the departure of that great and enlightened spirit. The crude admiration which can make no distinctions never renders justice to what is really great. The colossal form is seen through a mist, dilated perhaps, but obscured and undefined, instead of standing forth conspicuous in its massive solidity and determinate lineaments and dimensions. The less confused apprehension of the object verifies its magnitude while perceiving its clear line of circumscription. The persons who could see where Mr. Hall's rare excellence had a limit short of the ideal perfection of a preacher, would, by the same judgment, form the justest and the highest estimate of the offerings which, in his person, reason and genius consecrated to religion—of the force of evidence with which he maintained its doctrines, of the solemn energy with which he urged its obligations, and of the sublimity with which he displayed its relations and prospects.

By those persons the loss is reflected on with a sentiment peculiar to the event, never experienced before, nor to be expected in any future instance. The removal of any worthy minister, while in full possession and activity of his faculties, is a mournful occurrence; but there is the consideration that many such remain, and that perhaps an equal may follow where the esteemed instructor is withdrawn. But the feeling in the present instance is of a loss altogether irreparable.

The cultivated portion of the hearers have a sense of privation partaking of desolateness. An animating influence that pervaded, and enlarged, and raised their minds, is extinct. While ready to give due honour to all valuable preachers, and knowing that the lights of religious instruction will still shine with useful lustre, and new ones continually rise, they involuntarily and pensively turn to look at the last fading colours in the distance where the greater luminary is set.

CHRISTIANITY CONSISTENT WITH A LOVE OF FREEDOM:

BEING

AN ANSWER

TO

A SERMON,

LATELY PUBLISHED, BY THE REV. JOHN CLAYTON.

[PUBLISHED IN 1791.]

PREFACE.

It may be proper just to remark, that the animadversions I have made on Mr. Clayton's Sermon did not arise from my conviction of there being any thing even of plausibility in his reasonings, but from an apprehension that certain accidental and occasional prejudices might give some degree of weight to one of the weakest defences of a bad cause that was ever undertaken. I have taken up more time in showing that there is no *proper connexion* between the Unitarian doctrine and the principles of liberty than the subject may seem to require; but this will not be thought superfluous by those who recollect that that idea seems to be the great hinge of Mr. Clayton's discourse, and that it appears amongst the orthodox part of the dissenters to have been productive already of unhappy effects. I shall only add, that these remarks would have appeared much sooner but for severe indisposition, and that I was induced to write them chiefly from a persuasion that they might perhaps, in the present instance, have somewhat of additional weight as coming from one who is *not* an Unitarian.

Cambridge,
Sept. 17, 1791

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

'CHRISTIANITY consistent with a Love of Freedom' was written when Mr. Hall was twenty-seven years of age; and he never would consent to its re-publication. He continued to think the main principles correct and important; but he regarded the tone of animadversion as severe, sarcastic, and unbecoming. Three or four editions have, however, been printed surreptitiously; and one of them, which now lies before me, is so complete an imitation of the original edition of 1791, as usually to escape detection. It is printed with an old-fashioned type, and on dingy-coloured paper, to suit its assumed age. But on comparing it closely with the genuine edition, I find that three of the capital letters, on different pages, have too modern and broad a face; and, on holding up the paper on which it is printed to a strong light, I perceive a water-mark which gives the date 1818 to the *paper* of a pamphlet which purports to be *printed* in 1791! If any of even the lowest class of booksellers will have recourse to such contemptible forgeries as this, an author is evidently no longer master of his intellectual property, nor can he when he pleases withdraw it from the public eye.

This, though one of the earliest productions laid by Mr. Hall before the public, is, with the exception already adverted to, by no means calculated to deteriorate his reputation. It contains some powerful reasoning as well as some splendid passages, and the concluding four or five pages exhibit a fine specimen of that union of severe taste, and lofty genius, and noble sentiment, which is evinced, I think, more frequently in his compositions than in those of any other modern author.

I have no fear of incurring blame for having cancelled throughout the name of the individual against whom Mr. Hall's strictures were levelled. Venerable for his age, and esteemed for his piety, who would now voluntarily cause him, or those who love him, a pang?*

ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY,
June 1, 1831.

* As the name is now pretty generally known, and the distance of the event removes all personal feelings, there appears no reason why it should be suppressed in the present edition. It is "The Reverend John Clayton," at that time minister of the Weigh House, Eastcheap.—*Publisher.*

CHRISTIANITY

CONSISTENT WITH A LOVE OF FREEDOM,

&c. &c.

This is a period distinguished for extraordinary occurrences, whether we contemplate the world under its larger divisions, or in respect to those smaller communities and parties, into which it is broken and divided. We have lately witnessed, with astonishment and regret, the attempts of a celebrated orator to overthrow the principles of freedom, which he had rendered himself illustrious by defending; as well as to cover with reproach the characters of those by whom, in the earlier part of life, he was most caressed and distinguished. The success of these efforts is pretty generally known, and is such as it might have been expected would have been sufficient to deter from similar attempts. But we now behold a dissenting minister coming forth to the public under the character of a flatterer of power, and an *accuser of his brethren.* If the splendid eloquence that adorns every part of Mr. Burke's celebrated book cannot shelter the author from confutation, and his system from contempt, Mr. Clayton, with talents far inferior, has but little to expect in the same cause. It is not easy to conceive the motives which could impel him to publish his sermon. From his own account it should seem he was anxious to disabuse the legislature, and to convince them there are many amongst the dissenters who highly disapprove the sentiments and conduct of the more patriotic part of their brethren. How far he may be qualified from his talents or connexions, as a mouth, to declare the sentiments of any considerable portion of the dissenters, I shall not pretend to decide; but shall candidly confess, there are not wanting amongst us persons who are ready upon all occasions to oppose those principles on which the very existence of our dissent is founded. Every party will have its apostates of this kind; it is our consolation, however, that their numbers are comparatively small, that they are generally considered

as our reproach, and that their conduct is in a great measure the effect of necessity, as they consist almost entirely of persons who can only make themselves heard by confusion and discord. If our author wishes to persuade the legislature the friends of arbitrary power are conspicuous for their number or their rank in the dissenting interest, he has most effectually defeated his own intentions, as scarce any thing could give them a meaner opinion of that party, in both these respects, than this publication of its champion. The sermon he has obtruded upon the public is filled with paradoxes of so singular a complexion, and so feebly supported, that I find it difficult to lay hold of any thing in the form of argument, with sufficient steadiness for the purpose of discussion.

I shall endeavour, however, with as much distinctness as I am able, to select the fundamental principles on which the discourse rests, and shall attempt, as I proceed, to demonstrate their falsehood and danger.

Our author's favourite maxim is the inconsistency of the Christian profession with political science, and the certain injury its spirit and temper must sustain from every kind of interference with the affairs of government. Political subjects he considers as falling within the *peculiar* province of the irreligious; ministers, in particular, he maintains, should ever observe, amidst the concussions of party, an entire neutrality; or if at any time they depart from their natural line of conduct, it should only be in defence of the measures of government, in allaying dissensions, and in convincing the people they are incompetent judges of their rights. These are the servile maxims that run through the whole of this extraordinary discourse; and, that I may give a kind of method to the following observations upon them, I shall show in the first place the relation Christianity bears to civil government, and its consistency with political discussion, as conducted either by ordinary Christians or ministers; in the next place, I shall examine some of the pretences on which the author founds his principles.

Section I.

On the Duty of common Christians in Relation to Civil Polity.

The momentous errors Mr. Clayton has committed ap-

pear to me to have arisen from an inattention to the proper design of Christianity, and the place and station it was intended to occupy. On this subject I beg the reader's attention to the following remarks :—

1st. Christianity was subsequent to the existence and creation of man. It is an institution intended to improve and ennoble our nature, not by subverting its constitution or its powers, but by giving us a more enlarged view of the designs of Providence, and opening a prospect into eternity. As the existence of man is not to be *dated* from the publication of Christianity, so neither is that order of things that flows from his relation to the present world altered or impaired by that divine system of religion. Man, under the Christian dispensation, is not a new structure erected on the ruin of the former ; he may rather be compared to an ancient fabric restored, when it had fallen into decay, and beautified afresh by the hand of its original founder. Since Christianity has made its appearance in the world, he has continued the same kind of being he was before, fills the same scale in the order of existence, and is distinguished by the same propensities and powers.

In short, Christianity is not a reorganization of the principles of man, but an institution for his improvement. Hence it follows, that whatever rights are founded on the constitution of human nature, cannot be diminished or impaired by the introduction of revealed religion, which occupies itself entirely on the interests of a future world, and takes no share in the concerns of the present in any other light than as it is a state of preparation and trial. Christianity is a discovery of a future life, and acquaints us with the means by which its happiness may be secured ; civil government is altogether an affair of the present state, and is no more than a provision of human skill, designed to ensure freedom and tranquillity during our continuance on this temporary stage of existence. Between institutions so different in their nature and their object, it is plain no real opposition can subsist ; and if ever they are represented in this light, or held inconsistent with each other, it must proceed from an ignorance of their respective genius and functions. Our relation to this world demands the existence of civil government ; our relation to a future renders us dependent on the aid of the Christian institution ;

so that in reality there is no kind of contrariety between them, but each may continue without interference in its full operation. Mr. Clayton, however, in support of his absurd and pernicious tenets, always takes care to place civil government and Christianity in opposition, whilst he represents the former as carrying in it somewhat antichristian and profane. Thus he informs us, *that civil government is a stage, erected on which, man acts out his character, and shows great depravity of heart.* All interference in political parties he styles *an alliance with the world, a neglecting to maintain our separation, and to stand upon our own hallowed ground. There is one way*, says he, by which he means to insinuate there is only one, *in which you may all interfere in the government of your country, and that is by prayer to God, by whom kings reign.* These passages imply that the principles of civil polity and religion must be at perpetual variance, as without this supposition, unsupported as it is in fact, they can have no force or meaning.

2nd. Mr. Clayton misleads his reader by not distinguishing the innocent entertainments or social duties of our nature from those acts of piety which fall within the *immediate province* of Christianity.

The employments of our particular calling, the social ties and endearments of life, the improvement of the mind by liberal inquiry, and the cultivation of science and of art, form, it is true, no part of the Christian system, for they flourished before it was known; but they are intimately connected with the happiness and dignity of the human race. A Christian should act ever consistent with his profession, but he need not always be attending to the peculiar duties of it. The profession of religion does not oblige us to relinquish any undertaking on account of its being *worldly*, for we must then go out of the world; it is sufficient, that every thing in which we engage is of such a nature as will not violate the principles of virtue, or occupy so much of our time or attention as may interfere with more sacred and important duties.

Mr. Clayton observes, *Jesus Christ uniformly waived interesting himself in temporal affairs, especially in the concerns of the then existing government;* and hence he draws a precedent to regulate the conduct of his followers. That our Saviour did not intermeddle with the policy of nations I am

as willing as our author to admit; for the improvement of this, any more than any other science which might be extremely short and defective, formed no part of his mission, and was besides rendered quite unnecessary by that energy of mind which, prompted by curiosity, by our passions and our wants, will ever be abundantly sufficient to perpetuate and refine every civil or human institution. He never intended that his followers, on becoming Christians, should forget they were men, or consider themselves as idle or uninterested spectators on the great theatre of life. The author's selection of proofs is almost always unhappy, but in no instance more than the present, when he attempts to establish his doctrine of the unlawfulness of a Christian interfering in the administration of government on our Saviour's silence respecting it, a circumstance of itself sufficient to support a quite contrary conclusion; for if it had been his intention to discountenance the study of political subjects, he would have furnished us, without doubt, with some general regulations, some stated form of policy, which should for ever preclude the necessity of such discussion; or, if that were impracticable, have let us into the great secret of living without government: or, lastly, have supplied its place by a theocracy similar to that of the Jews. Nothing of this has he accomplished, and we may therefore rest assured the political affairs of nations are suffered to remain in their ancient channels, and to be conducted as occasions may arise, by Christians or by others, without distinction.

3rd. The principles of freedom ought, in a more peculiar manner, to be cherished by Christians, because they alone can secure that liberty of conscience, and freedom of inquiry, which is essential to the proper discharge of the duties of their profession. A full toleration of religious opinions, and the protection of all parties in their respective modes of worship, are the natural operations of a free government: and every thing that tends to check or restrain them, materially affects the interests of religion. Aware of the force of religious belief over the mind of man, of the generous independence it inspires, and of the eagerness with which it is cherished and maintained, it is towards this quarter the arm of despotism first directs its attacks, while through every period the imaginary right of ruling the conscience has been the earliest as-

sumed, and the latest relinquished. Under this conviction, an enlightened Christian, when he turns his attention to political occurrences, will rejoice in beholding every advance towards freedom in the government of nations, as it forms not only a barrier to the encroachments of tyranny, but a security to the diffusion and establishment of truth. A considerable portion of personal freedom may be enjoyed, it is true, under a despotic government, or, in other words, a great part of human actions may be left uncontrolled; but with this an enlightened mind will never rest satisfied, because it is at best but an indulgence flowing from motives of policy, or the lenity of the prince, which may be at any time withdrawn by the hand that bestowed it. Upon the same principles, religious toleration may have an accidental and precarious existence in states whose policy is the most arbitrary; but, in such a situation, it seldom lasts long, and can never rest upon a secure and permanent basis, disappearing for the most part along with those temporary views of interest or policy, on which it was founded. The history of every age will attest the truth of this observation.

Mr. Clayton, in order to prepare us to digest his principles, tells us in the first page of his discourse, *that the gospel dispensation is spiritual, the worship it enjoins simple and easy, and if liberty of conscience be granted, all its exterior order may be regarded under every kind of human government.* This is very true, but it is saying no more than that the Christian worship may be always carried on, if it is not interrupted; a point, I presume, no one will contend with him. The question is, can every form of government furnish a *security* for liberty of conscience; or, which is the same thing, can the rights of private judgment be safe under a government whose professed principle is, that the subject has no *rights at all*, but is a vassal dependent on his superior lord. Nor is this a futile or chimerical question; it is founded upon fact. The state to which it alludes is the condition at present of more than half the nations of Europe; and if there were no better patriots than this author, it would soon be the condition of them all. The blessings which we estimate highly we are naturally eager to perpetuate, and whoever is acquainted with the value of religious freedom, will not be content to suspend it on the clemency of a prince, the indulgence of ministers, or

the liberality of bishops, if ever such a thing existed; he will never think it secure till it has a constitutional basis; nor even then, till by the general spread of its principles, every individual becomes its guarantee, and every arm ready to be lifted up in its defence. Forms of policy may change, or they may survive the spirit that produced them; but when the seeds of knowledge have been once sown, and have taken root in the human mind, they will advance with a steady growth, and even flourish in those alarming scenes of anarchy and confusion, in which the settled order and regular machinery of government are wrecked and disappear.

Christianity, we see, then, instead of weakening our attachment to the principles of freedom, or withdrawing them from our attention, renders them doubly dear to us, by giving us an interest in them, proportioned to the value of those religious privileges which they secure and protect.

Our author endeavours to cast reproach on the advocates for liberty, by attempting to discredit their piety, for which purpose he assures us, to be active in this cause is disreputable, and brings the reality of our religion into just suspicion. *Who are the persons*, he asks, *that embark? Are they the spiritual, humble, and useful teachers, who travail in birth, till Christ be formed in the hearts of their hearers? No. They are philosophical opposers of the grand peculiarities of Christianity.* It is of little consequence of what descriptions of persons the friends of freedom consist, provided their principles are just, and their arguments well founded; but here, as in other places, the author displays an utter ignorance of facts. Men who know no age but their own, must draw their precedents from it; or, if Mr. Clayton had glanced only towards the history of England, he must have remembered, that in the reigns of Charles the First and Second, the chief friends of freedom were the puritans, of whom many were republicans, and the remainder zealously attached to a *limited* monarchy. It is to the distinguished exertions of this party we are in a great measure indebted for the preservation of our free and happy constitution. In those distracted and turbulent times which preceded the restoration of Charles the Second, the puritans, who to a devotion the most fervent united an eager attachment to the doctrines of grace, as they are commonly called, displayed on every occasion a love of

freedom, pushed almost to excess; whilst the cavaliers, their opponents, who ridiculed all that was serious, and, if they had any religion at all, held sentiments directly repugnant to the tenets of Calvin, were the firm supporters of arbitrary power. If the unitarians, then, are at present distinguished for their zeal in the cause of freedom, it cannot be imputed to any alliance between their religious and political opinions, but to the conduct natural to a minority, who, attempting bold innovations, and maintaining sentiments very different from those which are generally held, are sensible they can only shelter themselves from persecution and reproach, and gain an impartial hearing from the public, by throwing down the barriers of prejudice, and claiming an unlimited freedom of thought.

4th. Though Christianity does not assume any immediate direction in the affairs of government, it inculcates those duties, and recommends that spirit, which will ever prompt us to cherish the principles of freedom. It teaches us to check every selfish passion, to consider ourselves as parts of a great community, and to abound in all the fruits of an active benevolence. The particular operation of this principle will be regulated by circumstances as they arise, but our obligation to cultivate it is clear and indubitable. As this author does not pretend that the nature of a government has no connexion with the felicity of those who are the subjects of it, he cannot without the utmost inconsistence deny, that to watch over the interests of our fellow creatures in this respect is a branch of the great duty of social benevolence. If we are bound to protect a neighbour, or even an enemy, from violence, to give him raiment when he is naked, or food when he is hungry, much more ought we to do our part toward the preservation of a free government; the only basis on which the enjoyment of these blessings can securely rest. He who breaks the fetters of slavery, and delivers a nation from thraldom, forms, in my opinion, the noblest comment on the great law of love, whilst he distributes the greatest blessing which man can receive from man; but next to that is the merit of him, who in times like the present, watches over the edifice of public liberty, repairs its foundations, and strengthens its cement, when he beholds it hastening to decay.

It is not in the power of every one, it is true, to benefit his

age or country, in this distinguished manner, and accordingly it is nowhere expressly commanded; but where this ability exists, it is not diminished by our embracing Christianity, which consecrates every talent to the public good. On whomsoever distinguished endowments are bestowed, as Christians we ought to rejoice when, instead of being wasted in vain or frivolous pursuits, we behold them employed on objects of the greatest general concern; amongst which those principles of freedom will ever be reckoned, which determine the destiny of nations, and the collective felicity of the human race.

5th. Our author expresses an ardent desire for the approach of that period when all men will be Christians. I have no doubt that this event will take place, and rejoice in the prospect of it; but whenever it arrives, it will be fatal to Mr. Clayton's favourite principles; for the professors of Christianity must then become politicians, as the wicked, on whom he at present very politely devolves the business of government, will be no more: or, perhaps he indulges a hope, that even then, there will be a sufficient number of sinners left to conduct political affairs, especially as wars will then cease, and social life be less frequently disturbed by rapine and injustice. It will still, however, be a great hardship, that a handful of the wicked should rule innumerable multitudes of the just, and cannot fail, according to our present conceptions, to operate as a kind of check on piety and virtue. How Mr. Clayton will settle this point I cannot pretend to say, except he imagines men will be able to subsist without any laws or civil regulations, or intends to revive the long-exploded tradition of Papias, respecting the personal reign.

Had Christianity been intended only for the benefit of a few, or as the distinction of a small fraternity, there might have been some pretence for setting its profession in opposition to human policy, since it might then have been conducted without their interference; but a religion which is formed for the whole world, and will finally be embraced by all its inhabitants, can never be clogged with any such impediment as would render it repugnant to the social existence of mankind.

Section II.

On the Duty of Ministers in Respect to Civil Polity.

Mr. Clayton is extremely severe upon those of his brethren, who, forsaking the quiet duties of their profession as he styles them, have dared to interfere in public affairs. This he considers a most flagrant offence, an alarming departure from their proper province; and in the fulness of his rage he heaps upon them every epithet which contempt or indignation can suggest; calls them meddling, convivial, political ministers, devoid of all seriousness and dignity. It is rather extraordinary, this severe correction should be administered by a man who is, at that moment, guilty of the offence he is chastising; reproaches political preachers in a political sermon; ridicules theories of government, and at the same time advances one of his own, a most wretched one indeed, but delivered in a tone the most arrogant and decisive. It is not political discussion then, it seems, that has ruffled the gentle serenity of our author's temper; for he too, we see, can bend, when it pleases him, from his spiritual elevation, and let fall his oracular responses on the duty of subjects and of kings. But the persons on whom he denounces his anathemas have presumed to adopt a system of politics inconsistent with his own, and it is less his piety than his pride that is shocked and offended. Instead of submitting to be moulded by any adept in cringes, and posture-master of servility, they have dared to assume the bold and natural port of freemen.

It will be unnecessary to say much on the duty of ministers, in respect to political affairs, as many of the reflections which this subject would suggest have been already advanced under a former head. A few considerations, however, present themselves here, to which I shall beg the reader's attention.

The duties of the ministerial character, it will on all hands be confessed, are of a nature the most sacred and important. To them should be directed the first and chief attention of every person who sustains it, and whatever is found to interfere with these momentous engagements, should be relinquished as criminal and improper. But there is no profession which occupies the mind so fully as not to leave many intervals of leisure, in which objects that lie out of its immediate

province will have a share of our attention; and I see not why these periods of recess may not be employed with as much dignity and advantage, in acquiring an acquaintance with the principles of government, as wasted in frivolous amusements, or an inactive indolence. Mr. Clayton, with his usual confidence, lays it down as a maxim, that the science of politics cannot be cultivated without a neglect of ministerial duties; and one would almost be tempted to suppose he had published his sermon as a confirmation of this remark; for a more striking example of political ignorance in a teacher of religion, has scarcely ever been exhibited. As far, therefore, as the preacher himself is concerned, the observation will be admitted in its full force; but he has surely no right to make his own weakness the standard of another's strength.

Political science, as far as it falls under our present contemplation, may be considered in two points of view. It may either intend a discussion of the great objects for which governments are formed, or it may intend a consideration of the means which may be employed, and the particular contrivances that may be fallen upon to accomplish those objects. For example, in vindicating the revolution of France, two distinct methods may be pursued with equal propriety and success. It may be defended upon its *principles* against the friends of arbitrary power, by displaying the value of freedom, the equal rights of mankind, the folly and injustice of those regal or aristocratic pretensions by which those rights were invaded; accordingly, in this light it has been justified with the utmost success. Or it may be defended upon its *expedients*, by exhibiting the elements of government which it has composed, the laws it has enacted, and the tendency of both to extend and perpetuate that liberty which is its ultimate object. But though each of these modes of discussion fall within the province of politics, it is obvious the degree of inquiry, of knowledge, and of labour they require, differs widely. The first is a path which has been often and successfully trod, turns upon principles which are common to all times and places, and which demand little else to enforce conviction, than calm and dispassionate attention. The latter method, involving a question of expediency, not of right, would lead into a vast field of detail, would require a thorough acquaintance with the situation of persons and of things, as well as long and inti-

mate acquaintance with human affairs. There are but few ministers who have capacity or leisure to become great practical politicians. To explore the intricacies of commercial science, to penetrate the refinements of negociation, to determine with certainty and precision the balance of power, are undertakings, it will be confessed, which lie very remote from the ministerial department; but the *principles* of government, as it is a contrivance for securing the freedom and happiness of men, may be acquired with great ease.

These principles our ancestors understood well, and it would be no small shame if, in an age which boasts so much light and improvement as the present, they were less familiar to us. There is no class of men to whom this species of knowledge is so requisite, on several accounts, as dissenting ministers. The jealous policy of the establishment forbids our youth admission into the celebrated seats of learning; our own seminaries, at least till lately, were almost entirely confined to candidates for the ministry; and as on both these accounts, amongst us, the intellectual improvement of our religious teachers rises superior to that of private Christians, in a greater degree than in the national church, the influence of their opinions is wider in proportion. Disclaiming, as they do, all pretensions to dominion, their public character, their professional leisure, the habits of study and composition which they acquire, concur to point them out as the natural guardians, in some measure, of our liberties and rights. Besides, as they are appointed to teach the whole compass of social duty, the mutual obligations of rulers and subjects will of necessity fall under their notice; and they cannot explain or enforce the *reasons* of submission, without displaying the *proper end* of government, and the *expectations* we may naturally form from it; which, when accurately done, will lead into the very depths of political science.

There is another reason, however, distinct from any I have yet mentioned, flowing from the nature of an established religion, why dissenting ministers, above all men, should be well skilled in the principles of freedom. Wherever, as in England, religion is established by law with splendid emolu ments and dignities annexed to its profession, the clergy, who are candidates for these distinctions, will ever be prone to exalt the prerogative, not only in order to strengthen the arm

on which they lean, but that they may the more successfully ingratiate themselves in the favour of the prince, by flattering those ambitious views and passions which are too readily entertained by persons possessed of supreme power. The boasted alliance between church and state, on which so many encomiums have been lavished, seems to have been little more than a compact between the priest and the magistrate, to betray the liberties of mankind, both civil and religious. To this the clergy, on their part at least, have continued steady, shunning inquiry, fearful of change, blind to the corruptions of government, skilful to *discern the signs of the times*, and eager to improve every opportunity, and to employ all their art and eloquence to extend the prerogative and smooth the approaches of arbitrary power. Individuals are illustrious exceptions to this censure; it however applies to the body, to none more than to those whose exalted rank and extensive influence determine its complexion and spirit. In this situation, the leaders of that church, in their fatal attempt to recommend and embellish a slavish system of principles, will, I trust, be ever carefully watched and opposed by those who hold a similar station amongst the dissenters; that, at all events, there may remain one asylum to which insulted freedom may retire unmolested. These considerations are sufficient to justify every dissenting minister in well-timed exertions for the public cause, and from them we may learn what opinion to entertain of Mr. Clayton's weak and malignant invectives.

From the general strain of his discourse, it would be natural to conclude he was an enemy to every interference of ministers on political occasions; but this is not the case. *Ministers*, says he, *may interfere as peace-makers, and by proper methods should counteract the spirit of faction raised by persons who seem born to vex the state.* After having taught them to remain in a quiet neutrality, he invests them all at once with the high character of arbiters between the contending parties, without considering that an office of so much delicacy would demand a most intimate acquaintance with the pretensions of both. Ministers, it should seem, instead of declining political interference, are to become such adepts in the science of government, as to distinguish with precision the complaints of an oppressed party from the clamours of a faction, to hold the balance between the ruler

and the subject with a steady hand, *and to point out on every occasion, and counteract the persons who are born to vex the state.* If any should demand by what means they are to furnish themselves for such extraordinary undertakings, he will learn that it is not by political investigation or inquiry this profound skill is to be attained, but by a studied inattention and neglect; of which this author, it must be confessed, has given his disciples a most edifying example in his first essay. There is something miraculous in these endowments. This battle is not to the strong, nor these riches to men of understanding. Our author goes a step farther, for when he is in the humour for concessions no man can be more liberal. *So far as revolutions*, says he, *are parts of God's plan of government, a Christian is not to hinder such changes in states as promise an increase of happiness to mankind. But no where in the New Testament can a Christian find countenance in becoming a forward active man in regenerating the civil constitutions of nations.* A Christian is not to oppose revolutions, as far as they are parts of God's plan of government. The direction which oracles afford has ever been complained of for its obscurity; and this of Mr. Clayton, though no doubt it is fraught with the profoundest wisdom, would have been more useful, had it furnished some criterion to distinguish those transactions which *are* parts of God's plan of government. We have hitherto imagined the elements of nature, and the whole agency of man, are comprehended within the system of Divine Providence; but, as in this sense every thing becomes a part of the divine plan, it cannot be his meaning. Perhaps he means to confine the phrase *of God's plan of government* to that portion of human agency which is consistent with the divine will and promises, or, as he says, with an increase of happiness to mankind. If this should be his intention, the sentiment is just, but utterly subversive of the purpose for which it is introduced, as it concurs with the principle of all reformers in leaving us no other direction in these cases than reason and experience, determined in their exertions by a regard to the general happiness of mankind. On this basis the wildest projectors profess to erect their improvements. On this principle, too, do the dissenters proceed, when they call for a repeal of the test act, when they lament the unequal representation of par-

liament, when they wish to see a period to ministerial corruption, and to the encroachments of an hierarchy equally servile and oppressive; and thus, by one unlucky concession, this author has admitted the ground-work of reform in its fullest extent, and has demolished the whole fabric he was so eager to rear. He must not be offended if principles thus corrupt, and thus feebly supported, should meet with the contempt they deserve, but must seek his consolation in his own adage, as the correction of folly is certainly *a part of God's plan of government.* The reader can be at no loss to determine whom the author intends by a *busy active man in regenerating the civil constitutions of nations.* The occasion of the sermon, and complexion of its sentiments, concur in directing us to Dr. Priestley, a person whom the author seems to regard with a more than *odium theologicum*, with a rancour exceeding the measure even of his profession. The religious tenets of Dr. Priestley appear to me erroneous in the extreme; but I should be sorry to suffer any difference of sentiment to diminish my sensibility to virtue, or my admiration of genius. From him the poisoned arrow will fall pointless. His enlightened and active mind, his unwearied assiduity, the extent of his researches, the light he has poured into almost every department of science, will be the admiration of that period, when the greater part of those who have favoured, or those who have opposed him, will be alike forgotten. Distinguished merit will ever rise superior to oppression, and will draw lustre from reproach. The vapours which gather round the rising sun, and follow it in its course, seldom fail at the close of it to form a magnificent theatre for its reception, and to invest with variegated tints, and with a softened effulgence, the luminary which they cannot hide.*

It is a pity, however, our author, in reproaching characters so illustrious, was not a little more attentive to facts; for unfortunately for him, Dr. Priestley has not in any instance displayed that disaffection to government with which he has been charged so wantonly. In his Lectures on History, and his Essay on Civil Government, which of all his publications fall most properly within the sphere of politics, he has

* Whether or not the beautiful passage in the text was suggested by a floating vague recollection of the following lines of Pope, or were an avowed imitation of them, cannot now be determined. But be this as it

delineated the British constitution with great accuracy, and has expressed his warm admiration of it as the best system of policy the sagacity of man has been able to contrive. In his Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham, a much later work, where the seeds of that implacable dislike were scattered which produced the late riots, he has renewed that declaration, and has informed us, that he has been pleasantly ridiculed by his friends as being an unitarian in religion, and a trinitarian in politics. He has lamented, indeed, in common with every enlightened citizen, the existence of certain corruptions, which, being gradually introduced into the constitution, have greatly impaired its vigour; but in this he has had the honour of being followed by the prime minister himself, who began his career by proposing a reform in parliament, merely to court popularity it is true, at a time when it would not have been so safe for him to insult the friends of freedom after having betrayed their interest, as he has since found it.

Dr. Priestley has, moreover, defended with great ability and success the principles of our dissent, exposing, as the very nature of the undertaking demands, the folly and injustice of all clerical usurpations; and on this account, if on no other, he is entitled to the gratitude of his brethren. In addition to this catalogue of crimes, he has ventured to express his satisfaction on the liberation of France; an event which, promising a firmer establishment to liberty than any recorded in the annals of the world, is contemplated by the friends of arbitrary power throughout every kingdom of Europe with the utmost concern. These are the demerits of Dr. Priestley, for which this political astrologist and sacred calculator of nativities pronounces upon him that he is *born to vex the state*. The best apology candour can suggest, will be to hope Mr.

may, I think it will be readily admitted that the rhythm and harmony of the passage in prose are decidedly superior to those in the lines of the poet:—

> "Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue,
> But, like a shadow, prove the substance true:
> For envied wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known
> Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.
> When first that sun too powerful beams displays,
> It draws up vapours which obscure its rays:
> But e'en those clouds at last adorn its way,
> Reflect new glories, and augment the day."—ED.

Clayton has never read Dr. Priestley's political works; a conjecture somewhat confirmed from his disclaiming all attention to political theories, and from the extreme ignorance he displays through the whole of his discourse on political topics. Still it is to be wished he would have condescended to understand what he means to confute, if it had been only to save himself the trouble and disgrace of this publication.

The manner in which he speaks of the Birmingham riots, and the cause to which he traces them, are too remarkable to pass unnoticed.

When led, says he, speaking of the sufferers, *by officious zeal, from the quiet duties of their profession into the Senator's province: unhallowed boisterous passions in others, like their own, God may permit to chastise them.* For my own part I was some time before I could develope this extraordinary passage; but I now find the darkness in which it is veiled is no more than that mystic sublimity which has always tinctured the language of those who are appointed to interpret the counsels of heavens.

I would not have Mr. Clayton deal too freely in these visions, lest the fire and illumination of the prophet should put out the reason of the man, a caution the more necessary in the present instance, as it glimmers so feebly already in several parts of his discourse, that its extinction would not be at all extraordinary. We are, no doubt, much obliged to him for letting us into a secret we could never have learnt any other way. We thank him heartily for informing us that the Birmingham riots were a judgment; and, as we would wish to be grateful for such an important communication, we would whisper in his ear in return, that he should be particularly careful not to suffer this itch of prophesying to grow upon him, men being extremely apt, in this degenerate age, to mistake a prophet for a madman, and to lodge them in the same place of confinement. The best use he could make of his mantle would be to bequeath it to the use of posterity, as for the want of it I am afraid they will be in danger of falling into some very unhappy mistakes. To their unenlightened eyes it will appear a reproach, that in the eighteenth century, an age that boasts its science and improvement, the first philosopher in Europe, of a character unblemished, and of manners the most mild and gentle, should be torn from his family, and

obliged to flee an outcast and a fugitive from the murderous hands of a frantic rabble; but when they learn that there were not wanting teachers of religion, who secretly triumphed in these barbarities, they will pause for a moment, and imagine they are reading the history of Goths or of Vandals. Erroneous as such a judgment must appear in the eyes of Mr. Clayton, nothing but a ray of his supernatural light could enable us to form a juster decision. Dr. Priestley and his friends are not the first that have suffered in a public cause; and when we recollect, that those who have sustained similar disasters have been generally conspicuous for a superior sanctity of character, what but an acquaintance with the counsels of heaven can enable us to distinguish between these two classes of sufferers, and, whilst one are the favourites of God, to discern in the other the objects of his vengeance? When we contemplate this extraordinary endowment, we are no longer surprised at the superiority he assumes through the whole of his discourse, nor at that air of confusion and disorder which appears in it; both of which we impute to his dwelling so much in the insufferable light, and amidst the coruscations and flashes of the divine glory; a sublime but perilous situation, described with great force and beauty by Mr. Gray:

> "He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:
> The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
> Where angels tremble while they gaze,
> He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
> Closed his eyes in endless night."

Section III.

On the Pretences Mr. Clayton advances in favour of his Principles.

Having endeavoured to justify the well-timed exertions of Christians and of ministers, in the cause of freedom, it may not be improper to examine a little more particularly under what pretences Mr. Clayton presumes to condemn this conduct.

1st. The first that naturally presents itself, is drawn from those passages of Scripture in which the design of civil government is explained, and the duty of submission to civil

authority is enforced. That on which the greatest stress is laid, is found in the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; "for there is no power but of God: the powers which be, are "ordained of God. Whoever therefore resisteth the power, "resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall re- "ceive unto themselves damnation. The Ruler is the Minister "of God to thee for good. But if thou doest that which is "evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. Where- "fore ye must be subject, not only for wrath, but conscience' "sake." This passage, which, from the time of Sir Robert Filmer to the present day, has been the stronghold of the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, will admit of an easy solution, by attending to the nature of Christianity, and the circumstances of its professors, during the period in which it was written. The extraordinary privileges and dignity conferred by the Gospel on believers, must have affected the minds of the first Christians, just emerging from the shades of ignorance, and awakened to new hopes, with singular force. Feeling an elevation to which they were strangers before, and looking down upon the world around them as the vassals of sin and Satan, they might be easily tempted to imagine the restraint of laws could not extend to persons so highly privileged, and that it was ignominious in the free men of Jesus Christ to submit to the yoke of idolatrous rulers. Natural to their situation as these sentiments might be, none could be conceived more detrimental to the credit and propagation of a rising religion, or more likely to draw down upon its professors the whole weight of the Roman empire, with which they were in no condition to contend. In this situation, it was proper for the apostle to remind Christians, their religion did not interfere with the rights of princes, or diminish their obligation to attend to those salutary regulations which are established for the protection of innocence and the punishment of the guilty. That this only was the intention of the writer, may be inferred from the considerations he adduces to strengthen his advice. He does not draw his arguments for submission from anything *peculiar* to the *Christian system*, as he must have done, had he intended to oppose that religion to the natural rights of mankind, but from the utility and necessity of civil restraints.

" The Ruler is the Minister of God to thee for good," is the reason he urges for submission. Civil government, as if he had said, is a salutary institution, appointed to restrain and punish outrage and injustice, but exhibiting to the quiet and inoffensive nothing of which they need to be afraid. " If " thou doest that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the " sword in vain." He is an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Christians were not to consider themselves privileged above their fellow-citizens, as their religion conferred upon them no civil immunities, but left them subject to all the ties and restraints, whatever they were, which could be justly imposed by the civil power on any other part of mankind.

The limits of every duty must be determined by its *reasons*, and the only ones assigned *here*, or that *can* be assigned for submission to civil authority, are its *tendency to do good;* wherever therefore this shall cease to be the case, submission becomes absurd, having no longer any *rational view*. But at what time this evil shall be judged to have arrived, or what remedy it may be proper to apply, Christianity does not decide, but leaves to be determined by an appeal to natural reason and right. By one of the strangest misconceptions in the world, when we are taught that Christianity does not bestow upon us any *new* rights, it has been thought to strip us of our *old;* which is just the same as it would be to conclude, because it did not first furnish us with hands or feet, it obliges us to cut them off.

Under every form of government, that civil order which affords protection to property, and tranquillity to individuals, must be obeyed; and I have no doubt, that before the revolution in France, they who are now its warmest admirers, had they lived there, would have yielded a quiet submission to its laws, as being conscious the social compact can only be considered as dissolved by an expression of the general will. In the mean time, they would have continued firm in avowing the principles of freedom, and by the diffusion of political knowledge, have endeavoured to train and prepare the minds of their fellow-citizens for accomplishing a change so desirable.

It is not necessary to enter into a particular examination of the other texts adduced by Mr. Clayton in support of his sen-

timents, as this in Romans is by much the most to his purpose, and the remarks that have been made upon it may, with very little alteration, be applied to the rest. He refers us to the second chapter of the first Epistle of Peter. "Submit your-"selves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether "it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them "that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for "the praise of them that do well." Here it is sufficient to remark, all that can be inferred from this passage is, that Christians are not to hold themselves exempt from the obligation of obedience on account of their religion, but are to respect legislation as far as it is found productive of benefit in social life.

With still less propriety, he urges the first of Timothy, where, in the second chapter, we are "exhorted to supplica-"tions, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men, "for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead "a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." I am unacquainted with any who refuse a compliance with this apostolical admonition, except the nonjurors * may be reckoned of this class, whose political sentiments are of a piece with our author's.

Whilst he pleads with so much eagerness for the duty of passive obedience, we are not, however, to suppose, he wishes to extend it to all mankind. He admits, *that society, under the wisest regulations, will degenerate, and there will be periods when associated bodies must be resolved again into their first principles.* All resistance to authority, every revolution, is not in his own opinion criminal; it is Christians only, who are never to have a share in these transactions, never to assert their rights. With what different sentiments did the apostle of the Gentiles contemplate his character, when disdaining to accept a clandestine dismission from an unjust imprisonment, he felt a glow of indignant pride burn upon his cheek, and exclaimed with a Roman energy, "I was free "born!"

2nd. Another reason which this author assigns for a blind deference to civil authority is, that Christianity is *distinct from*

* There are now no "nonjurors;" the people once so called have for many years prayed for the king.—Ed.

and independent of human legislation. This principle no protestant dissenter will be inclined to question, but, instead of lending any support to the system of passive obedience, it will overturn it from its foundation; for if religion be really distinct from, and independent of, human legislation, it cannot afford any standard to ascertain its limits; as the moment it is applied to this purpose, it ceases to be a thing distinct and independent. For example, it is not doubted that a Christian may lawfully engage in trade or commerce; but if it be asked why his profession does not interfere with such an undertaking, the proper reply will be, religion is a thing distinct and independent. Should it be again inquired, why a Christian may become a trader, yet must not commit a theft, we should answer, that this latter action is not a thing distinct, or independent of religion, but falls immediately under its cognizance, as a violation of its laws. Thus it appears, that whatever portion of human conduct is really *independent* of religion, is lawful for that *very reason*, and can then only become criminal or improper, when it is suffered to intrench upon more sacred or important duties. The truth is, between two institutions, such as civil government and religion, which have a separate origin and end, no opposition can subsist, but in the brain of a distempered enthusiast.

The author's text confutes his doctrine, for had our Saviour annihilated our rights, he would have become a *judge* and *divider* over us, in the worst sense, if that could be said to be divided which is taken away. When any two institutions are affirmed to be distinct and independent, it can only mean, they do not *interfere;* but that must be a genius of no common size, who can infer from religion not *interfering* with the rights of mankind, that they cease to be, or that the patrimony, over which our Lord declined to exercise *any authority*, he has scattered and destroyed.

3rd. Similar to the last I have considered, is that pretence for excluding Christians from any concern in political affairs, taken from the conduct of our Saviour. Mr. Clayton tells us, that Christ uniformly waived interesting himself in the concerns of the then existing government; and to the same purpose he afterwards remarks, he always declined the functions of a civil magistrate.

The most careless reader will remark, the whole weight of

this argument rests upon a supposition, that it is unlawful for a Christian to sustain any other character in civil life, than that in which our Saviour literally appeared; a notion as extravagant as was ever nourished in the brain of the wildest fanatic. Upon this principle, he must have gone through such a succession of offices, and engaged in such an endless variety of undertakings, that in place of thirty-three years, he needed to have lived thirty-three centuries. On this ground the profession of physic is unlawful for a Christian, because our Lord never set up a dispensary; and that of Law, because he never pleaded at the bar. Next to the weakness of advancing such absurdity, is that of confuting it.

4th. The author, in proof of his political tenets, appeals to the devotional feelings of his hearers. "I ask you," says he, "who make conscience of entering into your closets, and "shutting your doors, and praying to your Father which seeth "in secret; what subjects interest you most then? Are not "factious passions hushed; the undue heat you felt in political "disputation remembered with sorrow?" He must be at a great loss for argument, who will have recourse to such loose and flimsy declamation. When engaged in devout admiration of the Supreme Being, every other object will be lost in the comparison; but this, though the noblest employment of the mind, was never intended to shut out all other concerns.

The affections which unite us to the world have a large demand upon us, and must succeed in their turn. If everything is to be deemed criminal that does not interest the attention in the very moment of worship, political concerns are not the only ones to be abandoned, but every undertaking of a temporal nature, all labour and ingenuity must cease. Science herself must shroud her light. These are notions rather to be laughed at than confuted, for their extravagance will correct itself. Every attempt that has been made to rear religion on the ruins of nature, or to render it subversive of the economy of life, has hitherto proved unsuccessful, whilst the institutions that have flowed from it are now scarcely regarded in any other light than as humiliating monuments of human weakness and folly. The natural vigour of the mind, when it has once been opened by knowledge, and turned towards great and interesting objects, will always overpower the illusions of fanaticism; or, could Mr. Clayton's principles be carried into

effect, we should soon behold men returning again to the state of savages, and a more than monkish barbarity and ignorance would overspread the earth. That abstraction from the world it is his purpose to recommend, is in truth as inconsistent with the nature of religion, as with the state and condition of man; for Christianity does not propose to take us *out* of the world, but to preserve us from the pollutions which are *in* it.

It is easy to brand a passion for liberty with the odious epithet of faction; no two things, however, can be more opposite. Faction is a combination of a few to oppress the liberties of many; the love of freedom is the impulse of an enlightened and presiding spirit, ever intent upon the welfare of the community, or body to which it belongs, and ready to give the alarm, when it beholds any unlawful conspiracy formed, whether it be of rulers or of subjects, with a design to oppress it. Every Tory upholds a faction; every Whig, as far as he is sincere and well informed, is a friend to the equal liberties of mankind. Absurd as the preacher's appeal must appear, on such an occasion, to the devout feelings of his hearers, we have no need to decline it. In those solemn moments, factious passions cannot indeed be too much hushed, but that warmth which animates the patriot, which glowed in the breast of a Sidney or a Hampden, was never chilled, or diminished, we may venture to affirm, in its nearest approaches to the uncreated splendour; and if it mingled with their devotion at all, could not fail to infuse into it a fresh force and vigour, by drawing them into a closer assimilation to that great Being, who appears under the character of the avenger of the oppressed, and the friend and protector of the human race.

5th. Lastly, the author endeavours to discredit the principles of freedom, by holding them up as intimately connected with the unitarian heresy. "We are not to be surprised," he says, "if men who vacate the rule of faith in "Jesus Christ, should be defective in deference and in obedient "regards to men who are raised to offices of superior influence, "for the purposes of civil order and public good." The persons he has in view are the unitarians, and that my reader may be in full possession of this most curious argument, it may be proper to inform him, that an unitarian is a person who believes Jesus Christ had no existence till he appeared

on our earth, whilst a trinitarian maintains, that he existed with the Father from all eternity. What possible connexion can he discern between these opinions and the subject of government?

In order to determine whether the supreme power should be vested in king, lords, and commons, as in England, in an assembly of nobles, as in Venice, or in a house of representatives, as in America or France, must we first decide upon the person of Christ? I should imagine we might as well apply to astronomy first, to learn whether the earth flattens at the poles. He explains what he means by *vacating* the rule of faith in Christ, when he charges the unitarians with a partial denial at least, of the inspiration of the Scripture, particularly the Epistles of St. Paul. But however clear the inspiration of the Scriptures may be, as no one pleads for the inspiration of civil governors, the deference which is due to the first, as coming from God, can be no reason for an unlimited submission to the latter. Yet this is Mr. Clayton's argument, and it runs thus. Every opposition to Scripture is criminal, because it is inspired, and therefore every resistance to temporal rulers is criminal, though they are *not* inspired.

The number of passages in Paul's Epistles which treat of civil government is small; the principal of them have been examined, and whether they are inspired or not, has not the remotest relation to the question before us. The inspiration of an author adds weight to his sentiments, but makes no alteration in his meaning; and unless Mr. Clayton can show that Paul inculcates unlimited submission, the belief of his inspiration can yield no advantage to his cause. Amongst those parties of Christians who have maintained the inspiration of the Scriptures in its utmost extent, the number of such as have inferred from them the doctrine of passive obedience has been extremely small; it is, therefore, ridiculous to impute the rejection of this tenet by unitarians to a disbelief of plenary inspiration. It behoves Mr. Clayton to point out, if he is able, any one of the unitarians who ever imagined that Paul means to recommend unlimited obedience; for till that is the case, it is plain their political opinions cannot have arisen from any contempt of that apostle's authority.

As there is no foundation in the nature of things for imagining any alliance between heretical tenets and the principles of freedom, this notion is equally void of support from fact or history. Were the Socinian sentiments, in particular, productive of any *peculiar impatience under* the restraints of government, this effect could not fail of having made its appearance on their first rise in Poland, while their influence was fresh and vigorous; but nothing of this nature occurred, nor was any such reproach cast upon them. That sect in England which has been always most conspicuous for the love of freedom, has for the most part held sentiments at the greatest remove from Socinianism that can be imagined. The seeds of those political principles which broke out with such vigour in the reign of Charles the First, and have since given rise to the denomination of whigs, were sown in the latter end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth by the hand of the puritans, amongst whom the unitarian doctrine was then utterly unknown. The dissenters descended from those illustrious ancestors, and inheriting their spirit, have been foremost in defence of liberty, not only, or chiefly, of late, since the spread of the Socinian doctrine, but before that system had gained any footing amongst us.

The knowledge and study of the Scriptures, far from favouring the pretensions of despotism, have almost ever diminished it, and been attended with a proportional increase of freedom. The union of Protestant princes preserved the liberties of the Germanic body when they were in danger of being overwhelmed by the victorious arm of Charles the Fifth; yet a veneration for the Scriptures, at a time when they had almost fallen into oblivion, and an appeal to their decisions in all points, was the grand characteristic of the new religion. If we look into Turkey, we shall find the least of that impatience under restraints which Mr. Clayton laments, of any place in the world, though Paul and his epistles are not much studied there.

There are not wanting reasons, which at first view, might induce us to conclude unitarianism was less favourable to the love of freedom than almost any other system of religious belief. If any party of Christians were ever free from the least tincture of enthusiasm, it is the unitarian; yet that passion has by every philosopher been judged friendly to liberty,

and to its influence, though perhaps improperly, some of its most distinguished exertions have been ascribed. Hume and Bolingbroke, who were atheists, leaned towards arbitrary power. Owen, Howe, Milton, Baxter, some of the most devout and venerable characters that ever appeared, were warmly attached to liberty, and held sentiments on the subject of government as free and unfettered as Dr. Priestley. Thus every pretence for confounding the attachment to freedom with the sentiments of a religious party, is most abundantly confuted both from reason and from fact. The zeal unitarians have displayed in defence of civil and religious liberty, is the spirit natural to a minority, who are well aware they are viewed by the ecclesiastical powers with an unparalleled malignity and rancour. Let the dissenters at large remember they too are a minority, a great minority, and that they must look for their security from the same quarter, not from the compliments of bishops, or presents from maids of honour.*

To abandon principles which the best and most enlightened men have in all ages held sacred, which the dissenters in particular have rendered themselves illustrious by defending, which have been sealed and consecrated by the blood of our ancestors, for no other reason than that the unitarians chance to maintain them, would be a weakness of which a child might be ashamed! Whoever may think fit to take up the gauntlet in the Socinian controversy will have my warmest good wishes; but let us not employ those arms against each other which were given us for our common defence.

Section IV.

On the Test Act.

Amidst all the wild eccentricities which, abounding in every part of this extraordinary publication, naturally diminish our wonder at anything such a writer may advance, I confess I am surprised at his declaring his wish for the continuance of

* Some of my readers perhaps need to be informed that I here allude to Mr. Martin, who, for similar services to those Mr. Clayton is now performing, has been considerably caressed by certain bishops, who have condescended to notice and to visit him. I think we do not read that Judas had any acquaintance with the high priests till he came to transact business with them.

the Test Act. This law, enacted in the latter end of the reign of Charles the Second, to secure the nation from popery, when it stood upon the brink of that precipice, is continued now that the danger no longer exists which first occasioned it, for the express purpose of preserving the church from the inroads of dissenters. That church, it must be remembered, existed for ages before it received any such protection; yet it is now the vogue to magnify its importance to that degree, that one would imagine it was its sole prop, whose removal would draw the whole fabric after it, or at least make it totter to its base. Whether these apprehensions were really entertained by the clergy who gave the signal for the commencement of hostilities on a late occasion, or whether they were only impelled by that illiberal tincture and fixed antipathy to all who differ from them, which hath ever marked their character, may be doubted; but to behold a dissenting minister joining with them in an unnatural warfare against his brethren, is a phenomenon so curious, that it prompts us to inquire into its cause. Let us hear his reasons. He and many others were convinced, he tells us, "that some of the persons who applied "for the repeal were influenced by enmity against the doctrinal "articles of the established church, and they could not sacrifice "their pious regard to truth, though in a church they had se-"parated from, to the policy of men, who, with respect to God "our Saviour, only consult how they may cast him down from "his excellency." When we hear the clergy exclaim that their church is in danger, we pretty well understand what they mean; they speak broad, as Mr. Burke says, and intend no more than that its emoluments are endangered; but when a serious dissenter expresses his pious regard to the doctrines of the church, it is the *truth* of those articles he must be supposed to have in view. Let us consider for a moment what advantage the Test Act is capable of yielding them. All those who qualify for civil offices, by a submission to this law, consist of two classes of people; they are either persons who are attached to the articles of the church, from whom, therefore, no danger could accrue; or they are persons who have signified their assent to doctrines which they inwardly disapprove, and who have qualified themselves for trust by a solemn act of religious deception. It is this latter class alone, it should be remembered, whom the Test Act can at all influence, and

thus the only security this celebrated law can afford the articles of the church, is founded in a flagrant violation of truth in the persons who become their guarantees. Every attempt that has been made to uphold religion by the civil arm, has reflected disgrace upon its authors; but of all that are recorded in the history of the world, perhaps this is the most absurd in its principle, and the least effectual in its operation. For the truth of sacred mysteries in religion, it appeals to the corruptest principles of the human heart, and to those *only;* for no one can be tempted by the Test Act to profess an attachment to the doctrines of the church, till he has been already allured by the dignity or emolument of a civil office. By compelling all who exercise any function in the state from the person who aspires to its highest distinctions, to those who fill the meanest offices in it, to profess that concurrence in religious opinions which is known never to exist, it is adapted, beyond any other human invention, to spread amongst all orders of men a contempt for sacred institutions, to enthrone hypocrisy, and reduce deception to a system! The truth of any set of opinions can only be perceived by *evidence;* but what evidence can any one derive from the mere mechanical action of receiving bread and wine at the hands of a parish priest? He who believes them already needs not to be initiated by any such ceremony; and by what magic touch those simple elements are to convert the unbeliever, our author, who is master of so many secrets, has not condescended to explain. He will not pretend to impute the first spread of these doctrines in the infancy of the Christian religion, or their revival at the Reformation, to any such means, since he imagines he can trace them in the New Testament. It is strange if that evidence which was powerful enough to introduce them where they were unknown, is not sufficient to uphold them where they are already professed and believed. At least, the Test Act, it must be confessed, has yielded them no advantage, for they have been controverted with more acrimony, and admitted by a smaller number of persons, since that law was enacted, than in any period preceding.

Were the removal of this test to overthrow the establishment itself, a consequence at the same time in the highest degree improbable, the articles of the church, if they are true, would remain unendangered, their evidence would continue

unimpaired, an appeal to the inspired writings from which they profess to be derived would be open, the liberty of discussion would be admitted in as great an extent as at present; this difference only would occur, that an attachment to them would no longer be suspected of flowing from corrupt and sinister motives. They would cease to be with the clergy the ladder of promotion, the cant of the pulpit, the ridicule of the schools. The futility of this or any other law, as a security to religious doctrines, may be discerned from this single reflection, that in the national church its own articles have, for a length of time, been either treated with contempt, or maintained with little sincerity and no zeal; whilst amongst the dissenters, where they have had no such aids, they have found a congenial soil, and continue to flourish with vigour.

On the political complexion of this test, as it does not fall so properly within my present view, I shall content myself with remarking, that harmless as it may appear at first sight, it carries in it the seeds of all the persecutions and calamities which have ever been sustained on a religious account. It proscribes not an individual who has been convicted of a crime, but a whole party, as unfit to be trusted by the community to which they belong; and if this stigma can be justly fixed on any set of men, it ought not to stop *here, or anywhere*, short of the actual excision of those who are thus considered as rotten and incurable members of the political body. In annexing to religious speculation the idea of political default, the principle of this law would justify every excess of severity and rigour. If we are the persons it supposes, its indulgence is weak and contemptible; if we are of a different description, the nature of its pretensions is so extraordinary as to occasion serious alarm, and call aloud for its repeal.

Mr. Clayton, indeed, calls this, and similar laws, a restraint very prudently imposed upon those who dissent from the established religion.* This restraint, however, is no less than a political annihilation, debarring them, though their talents were ever so splendid, from mingling in the counsels, or possessing any share in the administration of their country. With that natural relish for absurdity which characterizes this author, he imagines they have justly incurred this evil for dissenting from an *erroneous* religion.

* Page 6.

He tells us, in the course of his sermon,* that the grand "principle of separation from the church lies in the un-"worldly nature of our Saviour's kingdom." This reason for separation implies, that any attempt to blend worldly interests or policy with the constitution of a church is improper; but how could this be done more effectually than by rendering the profession of its articles a preliminary step to every kind of civil pre-eminence? Yet this abuse, which in his own estimation is so enormous as to form the great basis of separation, he wishes to perpetuate; and all things considered, hopes "that which is at rest will not be disturbed." In another part of his discourse,† he asks what temporalities has the church of Christ to expect? It is the mother of harlots, which says, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow." Would any one imagine this was the language of a man, who, in pleading for a Test Act, has rested the support of his creed on those very temporalities he affects so much to disdain, and has committed his religion to the arms of that mother of harlots to be reared and nourished! When speaking of the Test Act in the seventh page of his discourse, he thus expresses himself: "Surely the cross of Christ ought not to be "insulted by persons eager to press into the temple of "Mammon." Who could treat it with more poignant severity than is couched in this declaration? yet this is the language of a person who desires its continuance. In truth, his representations on this subject are pregnant with such contradictions, and rise above each other in so singular a gradation of absurdity, as will not be easily conceived, and perhaps hath scarce ever been equalled. At the very outset of his sermon, he declares, "Whenever the Gospel is secularized it is de-"based and misrepresented, and in proportion to the quantity "of foreign infusions is the efficacy of this saving health di-"minished." But human ingenuity would be at a loss to contrive a method of secularizing the Gospel more completely, than by rendering it the common passport of all who aspire to civil distinctions. I am really weary of exposing the wild and extravagant incoherence of such a reasoner. From a man who, professing to be the apologist of his party, betrays its interests, and exhibits its most illustrious members

* Page 35. † Page 26.

to reproach; who, himself a dissenter, applauds the penalties which the hierarchy has inflicted as a "*prudent restraint;*" who, with the utmost poignance, censures a law which he solemnly invokes the legislature to perpetuate; and proposes to secure the truths of religion, by the "profanation of its "sacraments,"* by "debasing the Gospel," and "insulting "the cross;" anything may be expected but consistence and decency. When such an author assures us he was not impelled by vanity to publish,† we may easily give him credit; but he should remember, though it may be a virtue to subdue vanity, it is base to extinguish shame. The tear which, he tells us, started from the eyes of his audience, we will hope, for their honour, was an effusion of regret, natural to his friends, on hearing him deliver sentiments which they considered as a disgrace to himself, and a calumny on his brethren. His affecting to pour contempt upon Dr. Price, whose talents and character were revered by all parties, and to hold him up as the *corrupter* of the dissenters, will not fail to awaken the indignation of every generous mind. Whether *they* were greater friends to their country, whose pride and oppression scattered the flames of discord across the Atlantic, poured desolation into the colonies, dismembered the empire, and involved us in millions of debt; or the man, who, with a warning voice, endeavoured to avert those calamities; posterity will decide.

He gives us a pompous enumeration ‡ of the piety, learning, and talents of a large body of his brethren who concur with him in a disapprobation of the theological and political tenets of the unitarians. The weakness of mingling them together has been shown already; but if these great and eminent men, whom the world never heard of before, possess that zeal for their religion they pretend, let them meet their opponents on the open field of controversy, where they may display their talents and prowess to somewhat more advantage than in *skulking* behind a *consecrated altar*.

There are many particulars, in the address and sermon, of an extraordinary complexion, which I have not noticed at all, as it was not my intention to follow the author step by step, but rather to collect his scattered representations into some

* Page 8. † Page 6. ‡ Ibid.

leading points of view. For the same reason, I make no remarks on his barbarous imagery; or his style, everywhere incoherent and incorrect, sometimes indecent, which cannot fail of disgusting every reader of taste. In a rude daubing peculiar to himself, where, in ridicule of Dr. Priestley, he has grouped together a *foreigner*, a *ship*, and *cargo* of *drugs*, he has unfortunately sketched his own likeness, except in the circumstance of the *ship*, with tolerable accuracy; for, without the apology of having been *shipped* into England, he is certainly a *foreigner* in his native tongue, and his publication will be allowed to be a *drug*.

Had he known to apply the remark with which his address commences, on the utility of accommodating instruction to the exigence of times, he would have been aware that this is not a season for drawing off the eyes of mankind from political objects. They were, in fact, never turned towards them with equal ardour, and we may venture to affirm they will long continue to take that direction. An attention to the political aspect of the world is not now the fruit of an idle curiosity, or the amusement of a dissipated and frivolous mind, but is awakened and kept alive by occurrences as various as they are extraordinary. There are times when the moral world seems to stand still; there are others when it seems impelled towards its goal with an accelerated force. The present is a period more interesting, perhaps, than any which has been known in the whole flight of time. The scenes of Providence thicken upon us so fast, and are shifted with so strange a rapidity, as if the great drama of the world were drawing to a close.* Events have taken place of late, and revolutions have been effected, which, had they been foretold a very few years ago, would have been viewed as visionary and extravagant; and their influence is yet far from being spent. Europe never presented such a spectacle before, and it is worthy of being contemplated with the profoundest attention by all its inhabitants. The empire of darkness and of despotism has been smitten with a stroke which has sounded through the universe. When we see whole kingdoms, after

* This glowing picture, as accurately descriptive of recent events as of those it was intended to portray, might tempt us almost to fancy that, after the revolution of a cycle of forty years, time had brought us back to the same state of things.—Ed.

reposing for centuries on the lap of their rulers, start from their slumber, the dignity of man rising up from depression, and tyrants trembling on their thrones, who can remain entirely indifferent, or fail to turn his eye towards a theatre so august and extraordinary! These are a kind of throes and struggles of nature, to which it would be a sullenness to refuse our sympathy. Old foundations are breaking up; new edifices are rearing. Institutions which have been long held in veneration as the most sublime refinements of human wisdom and policy, which age hath cemented and confirmed, which power hath supported, which eloquence hath conspired to embellish, and opulence to enrich, are falling fast into decay. New prospects are opening on every side of such amazing variety and extent as to stretch farther than the eye of the most enlightened observer can reach.

Some beneficial effects appear to have taken place already, sufficient to nourish our most sanguine hope of benefits much more extensive. The mischief and folly of wars begin to be understood, and that mild and liberal system of policy adopted which has ever, indeed, been the object of prayer to the humane and the devout, but has hitherto remained utterly unknown in the cabinets of princes. As the mind naturally yields to the impression of objects which it contemplates often, we need not wonder, if, amidst events so extraordinary, the human character itself should appear to be altering and improving apace. That fond attachment to ancient institutions, and blind submission to opinions already received, which has ever checked the growth of improvement, and drawn on the greatest benefactors of mankind danger or neglect, is giving way to a spirit of bold and fearless investigation. Man seems to be becoming more erect and independent. He leans more on himself, less on his fellow-creatures. He begins to feel a consciousness in a higher degree of personal dignity, and is less enamoured of artificial distinctions. There is some hope of our beholding that simplicity and energy of character which marks his natural state, blended with the humanity, the elegance, and improvement of polished society.

The events which have already taken place, and the further changes they forbode, will open to the contemplative of every character innumerable sources of reflection. To the philosopher they present many new and extraordinary facts, where

his penetration will find ample scope in attempting to discover their cause, and to predict their effects. He will have an opportunity of viewing mankind in an interesting situation, and of tracing the progress of opinion through channels it has rarely flowed in before. The politician will feel his attention powerfully awakened on seeing new maxims of policy introduced, new institutions established, and such a total alteration in the ideas of a great part of the world, as will oblige him to study the art of government as it were afresh. The devout mind will behold in these momentous changes the finger of God, and, discerning in them the dawn of that glorious period in which wars will cease, and anti-Christian tyranny shall fall, will adore that unerring wisdom whose secret operation never fails to conduct all human affairs to their proper issue, and impels the great actors on that troubled theatre to fulfil, when they least intend it, the counsels of heaven and the predictions of its prophets.

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,

AND FOR

GENERAL LIBERTY:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

REMARKS ON BISHOP HORSLEY'S SERMON,

Preached on the 30th January, 1793.

[PUBLISHED IN 1793.]

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

Since this pamphlet was first published, the principles it aims to support have received confirmation from such a train of disastrous events, that it might have been hoped we should have learned those lessons from misfortunes which reason had failed to impress. Uninstructed by our calamities, we still persist in an impious attack on the liberties of France, and are eager to take our part in the great drama of crimes which is acting on the continent of Europe. Meantime the violence and injustice of the internal administration keeps pace with our iniquities abroad. Liberty and truth are silenced. An unrelenting system of persecution prevails. The cruel and humiliating sentence passed upon Mr. Muir and Mr. Palmer, men of unblemished morals and of the purest patriotism, the outrages committed on Dr. Priestley, and his intended removal to America, are events which will mark the latter end of the eighteenth century with indelible reproach. But what has liberty to expect from a minister, who has the audacity to assert the king's right to land as many foreign troops as he pleases, without the previous consent of Parliament? If this doctrine be true, the boasted equilibrium of the constitution, all the barriers which the wisdom of our ancestors have opposed to the encroachments of arbitrary power, are idle, ineffectual precautions. For we have only to suppose for a moment, an inclination in the royal breast to overturn our liberties, and of what avail is the nicest internal arrangement against a foreign force? Our constitution, on this principle, is the absurdest system that was ever conceived; pretending liberty for its object, yet providing no security against the great antagonist and destroyer of liberty, the employment of military power by the chief magistrate. Let a foreign army be introduced into this or any other country, and quartered upon the subject without his consent, and what is there wanting, if such were the design of the prince, to complete the subjection of that country? Will armed foreigners be overawed by written laws or unwritten customs, by the legal

limitations of power, the paper lines of demarcation? But Mr. Pitt contends that though the sovereign may land foreign troops at his pleasure, he cannot subsist them without the aid of parliament. He may overrun his dominions with a mercenary army, it seems, but after he has subdued his subjects, he is compelled to have recourse to them for supplies. What a happy contrivance! Unfortunately, however, it is found that princes with the unlimited command of armies have hit upon a nearer and more efficacious method of raising supplies than by an act of parliament. But it is needless any farther to expose the effrontery, or detect the sophistry, of this shameless apostate. The character of Pitt is written in sunbeams. A veteran in frauds while in the bloom of youth, betraying first, and then persecuting, his earliest friends and connexions, falsifying every promise, and violating every political engagement, ever making the fairest professions a prelude to the darkest actions, punishing with the utmost rigour the publisher of the identical paper he himself had circulated,* are traits in the conduct of Pitt which entitle him to a fatal pre-eminence in guilt. The qualities of this man balance in an extraordinary manner, and sustain each other: the influence of his station, the extent of his enormities, invest him with a kind of splendour, and the contempt we feel for his meanness and duplicity is lost in the dread of his machinations, and the abhorrence of his crimes. Too long has he insulted the patience of his countrymen; nor ought we, when we observe the indifference with which the iniquities of Pitt's administration are viewed, to reproach the Romans for tamely submitting to the tyranny of Caligula or Domitian.

We had fondly hoped a mild philosophy was about to diffuse over the globe the triumph of liberty and peace. But, alas! these hopes are fled. The continent presents little but one wide picture of desolation, misery, and crimes: *on the earth distress of nations and perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.*

That the seeds of public convulsion are sown in every

* Mr. Holt, a printer, at Newark, is now imprisoned in Newgate for two years for reprinting, verbatim, An Address to the People on Reform, which was sanctioned for certain, and probably written, by the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt.

country of Europe (our own not excepted) it were vain to deny; seeds which, without the wisest precautions and the most conciliating councils, will break out, it is to be feared, in the overthrow of all governments. How this catastrophe may be averted, or how, should that be impossible, its evils may be mitigated and diminished, demands the deepest consideration of every European statesman. The ordinary routine of ministerial chicanery is quite unequal to the task. A philosophic comprehension of mind, which, leaving the beaten road of politics, shall adapt itself to new situations, and profit by the vicissitudes of opinion, equally removed from an attachment to antiquated forms and useless innovations; capable of rising above the emergency of the moment to the most remote consequences of a transaction; combining the past, the present, and the future, and knowing how to defend with firmness, or concede with dignity; these are the qualities which the situation of Europe renders indispensable. It would be a mockery of our present ministry to ask whether *they* possess those qualities.

With respect to the following Apology for the Freedom of the Press, the author begs leave to claim the reader's indulgence to its numerous imperfections, and hopes he will recollect, as an excuse for the warmth of his expressions, it is an eulogium on a *dead friend.*

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

THE accidental detention of the following pamphlet in the press longer than was expected, gave me an opportunity before it was published, of seeing Bishop Horsley's Sermon, preached before the House of Lords, on the 30th of January; and as its contents are relevant to my subject, a few remarks upon it may not be improper. His Lordship sets out with a severe censure of that *freedom of dispute*, on matters of *such high importance as the origin of government, and the authority of sovereigns*, in which he laments it has been the *folly of this*

country for several years past to indulge. If his Lordship has not inquired into those subjects himself, he can with little propriety pretend to decide in so imperious and peremptory a manner; unless it be a privilege of his office to dogmatise without examination, or he has discovered some nearer road to truth than that of reasoning and argument. It seems a favourite point with a certain description of men, to stop the progress of inquiry, and throw mankind back into the darkness of the middle ages, from a persuasion, that ignorance will augment their power, as objects look largest in a mist. There is, in reality, no other foundation for that alarm which the Bishop expresses. Whatever is not comprehended under revelation, falls under the inspection of reason; and since from the whole course of providence, it is evident that all political events, and all the revolutions of government, are effected by the instrumentality of men, there is no room for supposing them too sacred to be submitted to the human faculties. The more minds there are employed in tracing their principles and effects, the greater probability will there be of the science of civil policy, as well as every other, attaining to perfection.

Bishop Horsley, determined to preserve the character of an original, presents us with a new set of political principles, and endeavours to place the exploded doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance upon a new foundation. By a curious distinction between the *ground* of authority and of obedience, he rests the former on human compact, the latter on divine obligation. *It is easy to understand*, he says, *that the principle of the private citizen's submission must be quite a distinct thing from the principle of the sovereign's public title. And for this plain reason: The principle of submission, to bind the conscience of every individual, must be something universally known.* He then proceeds to inform us, that the kingly title in England is founded on the act of settlement; but that as thousands and tens of thousands of the people have never heard of that act, the principle which compels their allegiance must be something distinct from it, with which they may all be acquainted. In this reasoning, he evidently confounds the obligation of an *individual* to submit to the existing authority, with that of the community collectively considered. For *any particular number* of per-

sons to set themselves by force to oppose the established practice of a state, is a plain violation of the laws of morality, as it would be productive of the utmost disorder ; and no government could stand, were it permitted to individuals to counteract the general will, of which, in ordinary cases, legal usages are the interpreter. In the worst state of political society, if a people have not sufficient wisdom or courage to correct its evils and assert their liberty, the attempt of individuals to *force* improvements upon them is a presumption which merits the severest punishment. Social order would be inevitably dissolved, if every man declined a practical acquiescence in that political regulation which he did not personally approve. The duty of submission is, in this light, founded on principles which hold under every government, and are plain and obvious. But the principle which attaches a people to their allegiance, collectively considered, must exactly coincide with the title to authority ; as must be evident from the very meaning of the term authority, which, as distinguished from force, signifies a right to demand obedience. Authority and obedience are correlative terms, and consequently in all respects correspond, and are commensurate with each other.

The divine right, his Lordship says, *of the first magistrate in every polity to the citizen's obedience, is not of that sort which it were high treason to claim for the sovereign of this country. It is a right which in no country can be denied, without the highest of all treasons. The denial of it were treason against the paramount authority of God.* To invest any human power with these high epithets is ridiculous, at least, if not impious. The right of a prince to the obedience of his subjects, wherever it exists, may be called divine, because we know the Divine Being is the patron of justice and order ; but in that sense the authority of a petty constable is equally divine ; nor can the term be applied with any greater propriety to supreme than to subordinate magistrates. As to "*submission being among the general rules which proceed from the will of God, and have been impressed upon the conscience of every man by the original constitution of the world,*" nothing more is comprehended under this pomp of words, than that submission is, for the most part, a duty—a sublime and interesting discovery ! The minds of princes are seldom of the

firmest texture; and they who fill their heads with the magnificent chimera of divine right, prepare a victim where they intend a god. Some species of government is essential to the well-being of mankind; submission to some species of government is consequently a duty; but what kind of government shall be appointed, and to what limits submission shall extend, are mere human questions, to be adjusted by mere human reason and contrivance.

As the natural consequence of divine right, his Lordship proceeds to inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, in the most unqualified terms; assuming it as a principle to be acted upon under governments the most oppressive, in which he endeavours to shelter himself under the authority of Paul. The apostolic exhortation, as addressed to a few individuals, and adapted to the local circumstances of Christians at that period, admits an easy solution; but to imagine it prescribes the duty of the Roman empire, and is intended to subject millions to the capricious tyranny of one man, is a reflection as well on the character of Paul as on Christianity itself.

On principles of reason, the only way to determine the agreement of any thing with the will of God, is to consider its influence on the happiness of society; so that, in this view, the question of passive obedience is reduced to a simple issue: Is it best for the human race that every tyrant and usurper be submitted to without check or control? It ought likewise to be remembered, that if the doctrine of passive obedience be true, princes should be taught it, and instructed, that to whatever excesses of cruelty and caprice they proceed, they may expect no resistance on the part of the people. If this maxim appear to be conducive to general good, we may fairly presume it concurs with the will of the Deity; but if it appear pregnant with the most mischievous consequences, it must disclaim such support. From the known perfection of God, we conclude he wills the happiness of mankind; and that though he condescends not to interpose miraculously, that kind of civil polity is most pleasing in his eye which is productive of the greatest felicity.

On a comparison of free with arbitrary governments, we perceive the former are distinguished from the latter, by imparting a much greater share of happiness to those who live

under them; and this in a manner too uniform to be imputed to chance or secret causes. He who wills the end must will the means which ascertain it. His Lordship endeavours to diminish the dread of despotic government, by observing, that in its worst state it is attended with more good than ill, and that the *end of government, under all its abuses, is generally answered by it.* Admitting this to be true, it is at best but a consolation proper to be applied where there is no remedy, and affords no reason why we should not mitigate political as well as other evils, when it lies in our power. We endeavour to correct the diseases of the eye, or of any other organ, though the malady be not such as renders it useless.

The doctrine of passive obedience is so repugnant to the genuine feelings of human nature, that it can never be completely acted on: a secret dread that popular vengeance will awake, and nature assert her rights, imposes a restraint which the most determined despotism is not able to shake off. The rude reason of the multitude may be perplexed, but the sentiments of the heart are not easily perverted.

In adjusting the different parts of his theory, the learned Bishop appears a good deal embarrassed. *It will be readily admitted*, he says (p. 9), *that of all sovereigns, none reign by so fair and just a title as those who derive their claim from some such public act (as the act of settlement) of the nation which they govern.* That there are different degrees in *justice*, and even in *divine right* (which his Lordship declares all sovereigns possess), is a very singular idea. Common minds would be ready to imagine, however various the modes of *injustice* may be, *justice* were a thing absolute and invariable; nor would they conceive how *a divine right, a right the denial of which is high treason against the authority of God*, can be increased by the act of a nation. But this is not all. It is no just inference (he tells us) that the obligation upon the private citizen to submit himself to the authority thus raised, arises wholly from the act of the people conferring it, or from their compact with the person on whom it is conferred. But if the sovereign derives his claim from this act of the nation, how comes it that the obligation of the people to submit to his claim does not spring from the same act? Because *in all these cases*, he affirms, *the act of the people is only the*

means which Providence employs to advance the new sovereign to his station. In the hand of the Supreme Being the whole agency of men may be considered as an *instrument;* but to make it appear that the right of dominion is independent of the people, men must be shown to be instruments in political affairs in a more absolute sense than ordinary. A divine interposition of a more immediate kind must be shown, or the mere consideration of God's being the original source of all power will be a weak reason for absolute submission. Anarchy may have *power* as well as despotism, and is equally a link in the great chain of causes and effects.

It is not a little extraordinary that Bishop Horsley, the apologist of tyranny, the patron of passive obedience, should affect to admire the British constitution, whose freedom was attained by a palpable violation of the principles for which he contends. He will not say the Barons at Runnemede acted on his maxims in extorting the Magna Charta from King John, or in demanding its confirmation from Henry the Third. If he approves of their conduct he gives up his cause, and is compelled, at least, to confess the principles of passive obedience were not true at that time; if he disapproves of their conduct, he must, to be consistent, reprobate the restraints which it imposed on kingly power. The limitations of monarchy, which his Lordship pretends to applaud, were effected by resistance; the freedom of the British constitution flowed from a departure from passive obedience, and was therefore stained with high treason *against the authority of God.* To these conclusions he must inevitably come, unless he can point out something peculiar to the spot of Runnemede, or to the reign of King John, which confines the exception to the general doctrine of submission to that particular time and place. With whatever colours the advocates of passive obedience may varnish their theories, they must of necessity be enemies to the British constitution. Its spirit they detest; its corruptions they cherish; and if at present they affect a zeal for its preservation, it is only because they despair of any form of government being erected in its stead which will give equal permanence to abuses. Afraid to destroy it at once, they take a malignant pleasure in seeing it waste by degrees under the pressure of internal malady.

Whatever bears the semblance of *reasoning,* in Bishop

Horsley's discourse, will be found, I trust, to have received a satisfactory answer; but to animadvert with a becoming severity on the temper it displays, is a less easy task. To render him the justice he deserves in that respect would demand all the fierceness of his character.

We owe him an acknowledgment for the frankness with which he avows his decided preference of the clergy of France to dissenters in England;—a sentiment we have often suspected, but have seldom had the satisfaction of seeing openly professed before.

None, he asserts, *at this season, are more entitled to our offices of love, than those with whom the difference is wide in points of doctrine, discipline, and external rites; those venerable exiles, the prelates and clergy of the fallen church of France.* Far be it from me to intercept the compassion of the humane from the unhappy of any nation, tongue, or people: but the extreme tenderness he professes for the fallen church of France is well contrasted by his malignity towards dissenters. Bishop Horsley is a man of sense; and though doctrine, discipline, and external rites, comprehend the whole of Christianity, his tender, sympathetic heart is superior to prejudice, and never fails to recognize in a persecutor a friend and a brother. Admirable consistency in a Protestant Bishop, to lament over the fall of that antichrist whose overthrow is represented by unerring inspiration as an event the most splendid and happy! It is a shrewd presumption against the utility of religious establishments, that they too often become seats of intolerance, instigators to persecution, nurseries of Bonners and of Horsleys.

His Lordship closes his invective against dissenters, and Dr. Priestley in particular, by presenting a prayer in the spirit of an indictment. We are happy to hear of his Lordship's prayers, and are obliged to him for remembering us in them; but should be more sanguine in our expectation of benefit, if we were not informed, the prayers of the *righteous* only avail much. *Miserable men*, he tells us, we *are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* With respect to the first, we must have plenty of that article, since he has distilled his own; and if the bonds of iniquity are not added, it is only because they are not within the reach of his mighty malice.

It is time to turn from this disgusting picture of sanctimo-

nious hypocrisy and priestly insolence, to address a word to the reader on the following pamphlet. The political sentiments of Dr. Horsley are in truth of too little consequence in themselves to engage a moment's curiosity, and deserve attention only as they indicate the spirit of the times. The freedom with which I have pointed out the abuses of government will be little relished by the pusillanimous and the interested, but is, I am certain, of that nature which it is the duty of the people of England never to relinquish, or suffer to be impaired by any human force or contrivance. In the present crisis of things, the danger to liberty is extreme, and it is requisite to address a warning voice to the nation, that may disturb its slumbers, if it cannot heal its lethargy. When we look at the distraction and misery of a neighbouring country, we behold a scene that is enough to make the most hardy republican tremble at the idea of a revolution. Nothing but an obstinate adherence to abuses can ever push the people of England to that fatal extremity. But if the state of things continues to grow worse and worse, if the friends of reform, the true friends of their country, continue to be overwhelmed by calumny and persecution, the confusion will probably be dreadful, the misery extreme, and the calamities that await us too great for human calculation.

What must be the guilt of those men who can calmly contemplate the approach of anarchy or despotism, and rather choose to behold the ruin of their country than resign the smallest pittance of private emolument and advantage! To reconcile the disaffected, to remove discontents, to allay animosities, and open a prospect of increasing happiness and freedom, is yet in our power. But if a contrary course be taken, the sun of Great Britain is set for ever, her glory departed, and her history added to the catalogue of the mighty empires which exhibit the instability of all human grandeur, of empires which, after they rose by virtue to be the admiration of the world, sunk by corruption into obscurity and contempt. If any thing shall then remain of her boasted constitution, it will display magnificence in disorder, majestic desolation, Babylon in ruins, where, in the midst of broken arches and fallen columns, posterity will trace the *monuments* only of our ancient freedom!

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE NEW EDITION.

As the following pamphlet has been long out of print, the reader will naturally expect some reason should be assigned for its republication. I might satisfy myself with safely affirming that I have no alternative left but either to publish it myself, or permit it to be done by others, since the copyright has long since expired; and I have been under the necessity of claiming as a favour what I could not insist upon as a right.

In addition to this, a most erroneous inference has been drawn from my suffering it to fall into neglect. It has been often insinuated that my political principles have undergone a revolution, and that I have renounced the opinions which it was the object of this pamphlet to establish. I must beg leave, however, to assert, that fashionable as such changes have been, and sanctioned by many conspicuous examples, I am not ambitious of the honour attached to this species of conversion, from a conviction that he who has once been the advocate of freedom and of reform, will find it much easier to change his conduct than his principles—to worship the golden image, than to believe in the divinity of the idol. A reluctance to appear as a political writer, an opinion, whether well or ill founded, that the Christian ministry is in danger of losing something of its energy and sanctity, by embarking on the stormy element of political debate, were the motives that determined me, and which, had I not already engaged, would probably have effectually deterred me from writing upon politics. These scruples have given way to feelings still stronger, to my extreme aversion to be classed with political apostates, and to the suspicion of being deterred from the honest avowal of my sentiments on subjects of great moment, by hopes and fears to which through every period of my life I have been a total stranger. The effect of increasing years has been to augment, if possible, my attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and to the cause of reform as inseparably combined with their preservation; and few things would give

me more uneasiness than to have it supposed I could ever become hostile or indifferent to these objects.

The alterations in the present edition are nearly all of minor importance; they chiefly consist of slight literary corrections, which very rarely affect the sense. It was not my wish or intention to impair the *identity* of the performance. There is in several parts an acrimony and vehemence in the language which the candid reader will put to the account of juvenile ardour; and which, should it be deemed excessive, he will perceive could not be corrected without producing a new composition. One passage in the preface, delineating the character of the late Bishop Horsley, is omitted. On mature reflection, it appeared to the writer not quite consistent either with the spirit of Christianity, or with the reverence due to departed genius. For the severity with which he has treated the political character of Mr. Pitt, he is not disposed to apologize, because he feels the fullest conviction that the policy, foreign and domestic, of that celebrated statesman, has inflicted a more incurable wound on the constitution, and entailed more permanent and irreparable calamities on the nation, than that of any other minister in the annals of British history. A simple reflection will be sufficient to evince the unparalleled magnitude of his apostacy, which is, that the memory of the *Son* of Lord Chatham, the vehement opposer of the American War, the champion of Reform, and the idol of the people, has become the rallying point of toryism, the type and symbol of whatever is most illiberal in principle and intolerant in practice.

1821.

AN APOLOGY.

Section I.

On the Right of Public Discussion.

Solon, the celebrated legislator of Athens, we are told, enacted a law for the capital punishment of every citizen who should continue neuter when parties ran high in that republic. He considered, it should seem, the declining to take a decided part on great and critical occasions, an indication of such a culpable indifference to the interests of the commonwealth as could be expiated only by death. While we blame the rigour of this law, we must confess the principle on which it was founded is just and solid. In a political contest, relating to particular men or measures, a well-wisher to his country may be permitted to remain silent; but when the great interests of a nation are at stake, it becomes every man to act with firmness and vigour. I consider the present as a season of this nature, and shall therefore make no apology for laying before the public the reflections it has suggested.

The most capital advantage an enlightened people can enjoy, is the liberty of discussing every subject which can fall within the compass of the human mind; while this remains freedom will flourish; but should it be lost or impaired, its principles will neither be well understood nor long retained. To render the magistrate a judge of truth, and engage his authority in the suppression of opinions, shows an inattention to the nature and design of political society. When a nation forms a government, it is not wisdom, but *power* which they place in the hand of the magistrate; from whence it follows, his concern is only with those objects which *power* can operate upon. On this account the administration of justice, the protection of property, and the defence of every member of the community from violence and outrage, fall naturally within the province of the civil ruler, for these may all be accomplished by *power;* but an attempt to distinguish truth from error, and to countenance

one set of opinions to the prejudice of another, is to apply power in a manner mischievous and absurd. To comprehend the reasons on which the right of public discussion is founded, it is requisite to remark the difference between *sentiment* and *conduct*. The *behaviour* of men in society will be influenced by motives drawn from the prospect of good and evil: here then is the proper department of government, as it is capable of applying that good and evil by which actions are determined. Truth, on the contrary, is quite of a different nature, being supported only by *evidence*, and as, when this is represented, we cannot withhold our assent, so where this is wanting, no power or authority can command it.

However some may affect to dread controversy, it can never be of ultimate disadvantage to the interests of truth, or the happiness of mankind. Where it is indulged in its full extent, a multitude of ridiculous opinions will, no doubt, be obtruded upon the public; but any ill influence they may produce cannot continue long, as they are sure to be opposed with at least equal ability, and that superior advantage which is ever attendant on truth. The colours with which wit or eloquence may have adorned a false system will gradually die away, sophistry be detected, and every thing estimated at length according to its true value. Publications, besides, like every thing else that is human, are of a mixed nature, where truth is often blended with falsehood, and important hints suggested in the midst of much impertinent or pernicious matter; nor is there any way of separating the precious from the vile, but by tolerating the whole. Where the right of unlimited inquiry is exerted, the human faculties will be upon the advance; where it is relinquished they will be of necessity at a stand, and will probably decline.

If we have recourse to experience, that kind of enlarged experience in particular which history furnishes, we shall not be apt to entertain any violent alarm at the greatest liberty of discussion: we shall there see that to this we are indebted for those improvements in arts and sciences which have meliorated in so great a degree the condition of mankind. The middle ages, as they are called, the darkest period of which we have any particular accounts, were remarkable for two things; the extreme ignorance that prevailed, and an excessive veneration for received opinions; circumstances which,

having been always united, operate on each other, it is plain, as cause and effect. The whole compass of science was in those times subject to restraint; every new opinion was looked upon as dangerous. To affirm the globe we inhabit to be round, was deemed heresy, and for asserting its motion the immortal Galileo was confined in the prisons of the inquisition. Yet it is remarkable, so little are the human faculties fitted for restraint, that its utmost rigour was never able to effect a thorough unanimity, or to preclude the most alarming discussions and controversies. For no sooner was one point settled than another was started; and as the articles on which men professed to differ were always extremely few and subtle, they came the more easily into contact, and their animosities were the more violent and concentrated. The shape of the tonsure, or manner in which a monk should shave his head, would then throw a whole kingdom into convulsions. In proportion as the world has become more enlightened this unnatural policy of restraint has retired, the sciences it has entirely abandoned, and has taken its last stand on religion and politics. The first of these was long considered of a nature so peculiarly sacred, that every attempt to alter it, or to impair the reverence for its received institutions, was regarded, under the name of heresy, as a crime of the first magnitude. Yet, dangerous as free inquiry may have been looked upon when extended to the principles of religion, there is no department where it was more necessary, or its interference more decidedly beneficial. By nobly daring to exert it when all the powers on earth were combined in its suppression, did Luther accomplish that reformation which drew forth primitive Christianity, long hidden and concealed under a load of abuses, to the view of an awakened and astonished world. So great is the force of truth when it has once gained the attention, that all the arts and policy of the court of Rome, aided throughout every part of Europe by a veneration for antiquity, the prejudices of the vulgar, and the cruelty of despots, were fairly baffled and confounded by the opposition of a solitary monk. And had this principle of free inquiry been permitted in succeeding times to have full scope, Christianity would at this period have been much better understood, and the animosity of sects considerably abated. Religious toleration has never been complete even in England; but having pre-

vailed more here than perhaps in any other country, there is no place where the doctrines of religion have been set in so clear a light, or its truth so ably defended. The writings of deists have contributed much to this end. Whoever will compare the late defences of Christianity by Locke, Butler, or Clark, with those of the ancient apologists, will discern in the former far more precision and an abler method of reasoning than in the latter; which must be attributed chiefly to the superior spirit of inquiry by which modern times are distinguished. Whatever alarm then may have been taken at the liberty of discussion, religion, it is plain, hath been a gainer by it; its abuses corrected, and its divine authority settled on a firmer basis than ever.

Though I have taken the liberty of making these preliminary remarks on the influence of free inquiry in general, what I have more immediately in view is to defend its exercise in relation to government. This being an institution purely human, one would imagine it were the proper province for freedom of discussion in its utmost extent. It is surely just that every one should have a right to examine those measures by which the happiness of all may be affected. The control of the public mind over the conduct of ministers, exerted through the medium of the press, has been regarded by the best writers, both in our own country and on the continent, as the main support of our liberties. While this remains we cannot be enslaved; when it is impaired or diminished we shall soon cease to be free.

Under pretence of its being seditious to express any disapprobation of the *form* of our government, the most alarming attempts are made to wrest the liberty of the press out of our hands. It is far from being my intention to set up a defence of republican principles, as I am persuaded whatever imperfections may attend the British constitution, it is competent to all the ends of government, and the best adapted of any to the *actual* situation of this kingdom. Yet I am convinced there is no crime in being a republican, and that while he obeys the laws, every man has a right to entertain what sentiments he pleases on our form of government, and to discuss this with the same freedom as any other topic. In proof of this, I shall beg the reader's attention to the following arguments.

1. We may apply to this point in particular, the observation that has been made on the influence of free inquiry in general, that it will issue in the firmer establishment of truth, and the overthrow of error. Every thing that is really excellent will bear examination; it will even invite it; and the more narrowly it is surveyed, to the more advantage it will appear. Is our constitution a good one? it will gain in our esteem by the severest inquiry. Is it bad? then its imperfections should be laid open and exposed. Is it, as is generally confessed, of a mixed nature, excellent in theory, but defective in its practice? freedom of discussion will be still requisite to point out the nature and source of its corruptions, and apply suitable remedies. If our constitution be that perfect model of excellence it is represented, it may boldly appeal to the *reason* of an enlightened age, and need not rest on the support of an implicit faith.

2. Government is the creature of the people, and that which they have created they surely have a right to examine. The great Author of Nature having placed the right of dominion in no particular hands, hath left every point relating to it to be settled by the consent and approbation of mankind. In spite of the attempts of sophistry to conceal the origin of political right, it must inevitably rest at length on the acquiescence of the people. In the case of individuals it is extremely plain. If one man should overwhelm another with superior force, and after completely subduing him, under the name of government, transmit him in this condition to his heirs, every one would exclaim against such an act of injustice. But whether the object of his oppression be one, or a million, can make no difference in its nature, the idea of equity having no relation to that of numbers. Mr. Burke, with some other authors, are aware that an original right of dominion can only be explained by resolving it into the will of the people, yet contend that it becomes inalienable and independent by length of time and prescription. This fatal mistake appears to me to have arisen from confounding the right of dominion with that of private property. Possession for a certain time, it is true, vests in the latter a complete right, or there would be no end to vexatious claims; not to mention that it is of no consequence to society where property lies, provided its regulations be clear, and its possession undisturbed. For the

same reason it is of the essence of private property, to be held for the sole use of the owner, with liberty to employ it in what way he pleases, consistent with the safety of the community. But the right of dominion has none of the qualities that distinguish private possession. It is never indifferent to the community in whose hands it is lodged; nor is it intended, in any degree, for the benefit of those who conduct it. Being derived from the will of the people, explicit or implied, and existing solely for their use, it can no more become independent of that will, than water can rise above its source. But if we allow the people are the true origin of political power, it is absurd to require them to resign the right of discussing any question that can arise either upon its form or its measures, as this would put it for ever out of their power to revoke the trust which they have placed in the hands of their rulers.

3. If it be a crime for a subject of Great Britain to express his disapprobation of that form of government under which he lives, the same conduct must be condemned in the inhabitant of any other country. Perhaps it will be said a distinction ought to be made on account of the superior excellence of the British constitution. This superiority I am not disposed to contest; yet cannot allow it to be a proper reply, as it takes for granted that which is supposed to be a matter of debate and inquiry. Let a government be ever so despotic, it is a chance if those who share in the administration, are not loud in proclaiming its excellence. Go into Turkey, and the pachas of the provinces will probably tell you, that the Turkish government is the most perfect in the world. If the excellency of a constitution, then, is assigned as the reason that none should be permitted to censure it, who, I ask, is to determine on this its excellence? If you reply, every man's own reason will determine, you concede the very point I am endeavouring to establish, the liberty of free inquiry: if you reply, our rulers, you admit a principle that equally applies to every government in the world, and will lend no more support to the British constitution than to that of Turkey or Algiers.

4. An inquiry respecting the comparative excellence of civil constitutions can be forbidden on no other pretence than that of its tending to sedition and anarchy. This plea, how-

ever, will have little weight with those who reflect to how many ill purposes it has been already applied; and that when the example has been once introduced of suppressing opinions on account of their imagined ill tendency, it has seldom been confined within any safe or reasonable bounds. The doctrine of tendencies is extremely subtle and complicated. Whatever would diminish our veneration for the Christian religion, or shake our belief in the being of a God, will be allowed to be of a very evil tendency; yet few, I imagine, who are acquainted with history, would wish to see the writings of sceptists or deists suppressed by law; being persuaded it would be lodging a very dangerous power in the hands of the magistrate, and that truth is best supported by its own evidence. This dread of certain opinions, on account of their tendency, has been the copious spring of all those religious wars and persecutions which are the disgrace and calamity of modern times.

Whatever danger may result from the freedom of political debate in some countries, no apprehension from that quarter need be entertained in our own. Free inquiry will never endanger the existence of a good government; scarcely will it be able to work the overthrow of a bad one. So uncertain is the issue of all revolutions, so turbulent and bloody the scenes that too often usher them in, the prejudice on the side of an ancient establishment so great, and the interest involved in its support so powerful, that, while it provides in any tolerable measure for the happiness of the people, it may defy all the efforts of its enemies.

The real danger to every free government is less from its enemies than from itself. Should it resist the most temperate reforms, and maintain its abuses with obstinacy, imputing complaint to faction, calumniating its friends, and smiling only on its flatterers; should it encourage informers, and hold out rewards to treachery, turning every man into a spy, and every neighbourhood into the seat of an inquisition, let it not hope it can long conceal its tyranny under the mask of freedom. These are the avenues through which despotism must enter; these are the arts at which integrity sickens, and freedom turns pale.

Section II.

On Associations.

The associations that have been formed in various parts of the kingdom appear to me to have trodden very nearly in the steps I have been describing. Nothing could have justified this extraordinary mode of combination, but the actual existence of those insurrections and plots, of which no traces have appeared, except in a speech from the throne. They merit a patent for insurrections who have discovered the art of conducting them with so much silence and secrecy, that in the very places where they are affirmed to have happened, they have been heard of only by rebound from the cabinet. Happy had it been for the repose of unoffending multitudes, if the Associators had been able to put their mobs in possession of this important discovery before they set them in motion.

No sooner had the ministry spread an alarm through the kingdom against republicans and levellers, than an assembly of court-sycophants, with a placeman at their head, entered into what they termed an association, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, whence they issued accounts of their proceedings. This was the primitive, the metropolitan association, which, with few exceptions, gave the tone to the succeeding, who did little more than copy its language and its spirit. As the popular ferment has, it may be hoped, by this time in some measure subsided, it may not be improper to endeavour to estimate the utility, and develope the principles of these societies.

1. The first particular that engages the attention, is their *singular* and *unprecedented* nature. The object is altogether new. The political societies that have been hitherto formed, never thought of interfering with the operations of law, but were content with giving, by their union, greater force and publicity to their sentiments. The diffusion of principles was their object, not the suppression; and confiding in the justness of their cause, they challenged their enemies into the field of controversy. These societies, on the other hand, are combined with an express view to extinguish opinions, and to overwhelm freedom of inquiry by the terrors of criminal

prosecution. They pretend not to enlighten the people by the spread of political knowledge, or to confute the errors of the system they wish to discountenance: they breathe only the language of menace: their element is indictment and prosecution, and their criminal justice formed on the model of Rhadamanthus, the poetic judge of Hell.

Castigatque, auditque, dolos subigitque fateri.

2. They are not only new in their nature and complexion, but are unsupported by any just pretence of expedience or necessity. The British constitution hath provided ample securities for its stability and permanence. The prerogatives of the crown, in all matters touching its dignity, are of a nature so high and weighty as may rather occasion alarm than need corroboration. The office of Attorney-General is created for the very purpose of prosecuting sedition; and he has the peculiar privilege of filing a bill against offenders, in the King's name, without the intervention of a grand jury. If the public tranquillity be threatened, the king can embody the militia as well as station the military in the suspected places; and when to this is added the immense patronage and influence which flows from the disposal of seventeen millions a year, it must be evident, the stability of the British government can never be shaken by the efforts of any minority whatever. It comprehends within itself all the resources of defence which the best civil polity ought to possess. The permanence of every government must depend, however, after all, upon opinion, a general persuasion of its excellence, which can never be increased by its assuming a vindictive and sanguinary aspect. While it is the object of the people's approbation it will be continued; and to support it much beyond that period, by mere force and terror, would be impossible were it just, and unjust were it possible. The law hath amply provided against *overt acts* of sedition and disorder, and to suppress *mere opinions* by any other method than reason and argument, is the height of tyranny. Freedom of thought being intimately connected with the happiness and dignity of man in every stage of his being, is of so much more importance than the preservation of any constitution, that to infringe the former, under pretence of supporting the latter, is to sacrifice the means to the end.

3. In attempting to define the boundary which separates the liberty of the press from its licentiousness, these societies have undertaken a task which they are utterly unable to execute. The line that divides them is too nice and delicate to be perceived by every eye, or to be drawn by every rude and unskilful hand. When a public outrage against the laws is committed, the crime is felt in a moment; but to ascertain the qualities which compose a libel, and to apply with exactness the general idea to every instance and example which may occur, demand an effort of thought and reflection little likely to be exerted by the great mass of mankind. Bewildered in a pursuit which they are incapable of conducting with propriety, taught to suspect treason and sedition in every page they read, and in every conversation they hear, the necessary effect of such an employment must be to perplex the understanding and degrade the heart. An admirable expedient for transforming a great and generous people into a contemptible race of spies and informers!

For private individuals to combine together at all with a view to quicken the vigour of criminal prosecution is suspicious at least, if not illegal; in a case where the liberty of the press is concerned, all such combinations are utterly improper. The faults and the excellences of a book are often so blended, the motives of a writer so difficult to ascertain, and the mischiefs of servile restraint so alarming, that the criminality of a book should always be left to be determined by the particular circumstances of the case. As one would rather see many criminals escape than the punishment of one innocent person, so it is infinitely better a multitude of errors should be propagated than one truth be suppressed.

If the suppression of Mr. Paine's pamphlet be the object of these societies, they are ridiculous in the extreme; for the circulation of his works ceased the moment they were declared a libel; if any other publication be intended, they are premature and impertinent, in presuming to anticipate the decision of the courts.

4. Admitting, however, the principle on which they are founded to be ever so just and proper, they are highly impolitic. All violence exerted toward opinions which falls short of *extermination*, serves no other purpose than to render

them more known, and ultimately to increase the zeal and number of their abettors. Opinions that are false may be dissipated by the force of argument: when they are true, their punishment draws towards them infallibly more of the public attention, and enables them to dwell with more lasting weight and pressure on the mind. The progress of reason is aided, in this case, by the passions, and finds in curiosity, compassion and resentment, powerful auxiliaries.

When public discontents are allowed to vent themselves in reasoning and discourse, they subside into a calm; but their confinement in the bosom is apt to give them a fierce and deadly tincture. The reason of this is obvious: as men are seldom disposed to complain till they at least imagine themselves injured, so there is no injury which they will remember so long, or resent so deeply, as that of being threatened into silence. This seems like adding triumph to oppression, and insult to injury. The apparent tranquillity which may ensue is delusive and ominous; it is that awful stillness which nature feels, while she is awaiting the discharge of the gathered tempest.

The professed object of these associations is to strengthen the hands of government: but there is one way in which it may strengthen its own hands most effectually; recommended by a very venerable authority, though one from which it hath taken but few lessons. "He that hath *clean hands*," saith a sage adviser, "shall grow stronger and stronger." If the government wishes to become more vigorous, let it first become more pure, lest an addition to its strength should only increase its capacity for mischief.

There is a characteristic feature attending these associations, which is sufficient to acquaint us with their real origin and spirit; that is the silence, almost total, which they maintain respecting political abuses. Had they been intended, as their title imports, merely to furnish an antidote to the spread of republican schemes and doctrines, they would have loudly asserted the necessity of reform, as a conciliatory principle, a centre of union, in which the virtuous of all descriptions might have concurred. But this, however conducive to the good of the people, would have defeated their whole project, which consisted in availing themselves of an alarm which they had artfully prepared, in order to withdraw the public atten-

tion from real grievances to imaginary dangers. The Hercules of reform had penetrated the Augean stable of abuses; the fabric of corruption, hitherto deemed sacred, began to totter, and its upholders were apprehensive their iniquity was almost full. In this perplexity they embraced an occasion afforded them by the spread of certain bold speculations—(speculations which owed their success to the corruptions of government) to diffuse a panic, and to drown the justest complaints in unmeaning clamour. The plan of associating, thus commencing in corruption, and propagated by imitation and by fear, had for its *pretext* the fear of republicanism; for its *object* the perpetuity of abuses. Associations in this light may be considered as mirrors placed to advantage for reflecting the finesses and tricks of the ministry. At present they are playing into each other's hands, and no doubt find great entertainment in deceiving the nation. But let them beware lest it should be found, after all, none are so much duped as themselves. Wisdom and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal; but cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glittering for a moment, must pass away.

The candour and sincerity of these associators is of a piece with their other virtues; for while they profess to be combined in order to prevent riots and insurrections, attempted to be raised by republicans and levellers, they can neither point out the persons to whom that description applies, nor mention a single riot that was not fomented by their principles, and engaged on their side. There have been three riots in England of late on a political account; one at Birmingham, one at Manchester, and one at Cambridge; each of which has been levelled against dissenters and friends of reform.*

* The conduct of an honourable member of the House of Commons, respecting the last of these, was extremely illiberal. He informed the house, that the riot at Cambridge was nothing more than that the mob compelled Mr. Musgrave, one of his constituents, who had been heard to speak seditious words, to sing God save the King—a statement in which he was utterly mistaken. Mr. Musgrave, with whom I have the pleasure of being well acquainted, was neither guilty of uttering seditious discourse, nor did he, I am certain, comply with the requisition. His whole crime consists in the love of his country, and a zeal for parliamentary reform. It would be happy for this nation, if a portion only of the integrity and disinterested virtue which adorn his character could be infused into our great men.

The Crown and Anchor association, as it was first in order of time, seems also determined, by pushing to a greater length the maxims of arbitrary power, to maintain its pre-eminence in every other respect. The divine right of monarchy, the sacred anointing of kings, passive obedience and non-resistance, are the hemlock and night-shade which these physicians have prescribed for the health of the nation; and are yet but a specimen of a more fertile crop which they have promised out of the hot-bed of depravity. The opinions which they have associated to suppress, are contained, they tell us, in the terms liberty and equality; after which they proceed to a dull harangue on the mischiefs that must flow from equalizing property. All mankind, they gravely tell us, are not equal in virtue; as if that were not sufficiently evident from the existence of their society. The notion of equality in property was never seriously cherished in the mind of any man, unless for the purpose of calumny: and the *term* transplanted from a neighbouring country never intended *there* anything more than *equality of rights*—as opposed to feudal oppression and hereditary distinctions. An equality of rights may consist with the greatest inequality between the things to which those rights extend. It belongs to the very nature of *property* for the owner to have a full and complete right to that which he possesses, and consequently for all properties to have *equal* rights; but who is so ridiculous as to infer from thence, that the *possessions* themselves are equal? A more alarming idea cannot be spread among the people, than that there is a large party ready to abet them in any enterprise of depredation and plunder. As all men do not know that the element of the associators is calumny, they are really in danger for a while of being believed, and must thank themselves if they should realize the plan of equality their own malice has invented.

I am happy to find that Mr. Law, a very respectable gentleman, who had joined the Crown and Anchor society, has publicly withdrawn his name, disgusted with their conduct; by whom we are informed they receive anonymous letters, vilifying the characters of persons of the first eminence, and that they are in avowed alliance with the ministry for prosecutions, whom they intreat to order the *Solicitor-General to proceed on their suggestions.* When such a society declares *itself to be unconnected with any political party*, our respect

for human nature impels us to believe it, and to hope their appearance may be considered as an era in the annals of corruption which will transmit their names to posterity with the encomiums they deserve. With sycophants so base and venal, no argument or remonstrance can be expected to have any success. It is in vain to apply to reason when it is perverted and abused, to shame when it is extinguished, to a conscience which has ceased to admonish: I shall therefore leave them in the undisturbed possession of that true philosophical indifference which steels them against the reproaches of their own hearts, and the contempt of all honest men.

All the associations, it is true, do not breathe the spirit which disgraces that of the Crown and Anchor. But they all concur in establishing a political test, on the first appearance of which the friends of liberty should make a stand. The opinions proposed may be innocent, but the precedent is fatal; and the moment subscription becomes the price of security, the Rubicon is passed. Emboldened by the success of this expedient, its authors will venture on more vigorous measures: test will steal upon test, and the bounds of tolerated opinion will be continually narrowed, till we awake under the fangs of a relentless despotism.

Section III.

On a Reform of Parliament.

Whatever difference of opinion may take place in points of less importance, there is one in which the friends of freedom are entirely agreed, that is, the necessity of reform in the representation. The theory of the English constitution presents three independent powers; the King as executive head, with a negative in the legislature; an hereditary House of Peers; and an assembly of Commons, who are appointed to represent the nation at large. From this enumeration it is plain that the people of England can have no liberty, that is, no share in forming the laws, but what they exert through the medium of the last of those bodies; nor then, but in proportion to its independence of the other. The independence therefore of the House of Commons is the column on which the whole fabric of our liberty rests. Representation may be consi-

dered as complete when it collects to a sufficient extent, and transmits with perfect fidelity, the real sentiments of the people; but this it may fail of accomplishing through various causes. If its electors are but a handful of people, and of a peculiar order and description; if its duration is sufficient to enable it to imbibe the spirit of a corporation; if its integrity be corrupted by treasury influence, or warped by the prospect of places and pensions; it may, by these means, not only fail of the end of its appointment, but fall into such an entire dependence on the executive branch, as to become a most dangerous instrument of arbitrary power. The usurpation of the emperors at Rome would not have been safe, unless it had concealed itself behind the formalities of a senate.

The confused and inadequate state of our representation, at present, is too obvious to escape the attention of the most careless observer. While, through the fluctuation of human affairs, many towns of ancient note have fallen into decay, and the increase of commerce has raised obscure hamlets to splendour and distinction, the state of representation standing still amidst these vast changes, points back to an order of things which no longer subsists. The opulent towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, send no members to parliament; the decayed boroughs of Cornwall appoint a multitude of representatives. Old Sarum sends two members, though there are not more than one or two families that reside in it. The disproportion between those who vote for representatives and the people at large is so great, that the majority of our House of Commons is chosen by less than eight thousand, in a kingdom consisting of as many millions. Mr. Burgh, in his excellent political disquisitions, has made a very laborious calculation on this head, from which it appears that the affairs of this great empire are decided by the suffrages of between five and six thousand electors; so that our representation, instead of being co-extended with the people, fails of this in a proportion that is truly enormous. The qualifications, moreover, that confer the right of election are capricious and irregular. In some places it belongs to the corporation, or to those whom they think proper to make free; in some to every housekeeper; in others it is attached to a particular estate, whose proprietor is absolute lord of the borough, of which he makes his advan-

tage by representing it himself, or disposing of it to the best bidder. In counties the right of election is annexed only to one kind of property, that of freehold; the proprietor of copyhold land being entirely deprived of it, though his political situation is precisely the same.*

The consequence of this perplexity in the qualifications of electors is often a tedious scrutiny and examination before a committee of the House of Commons, prolonged to such a length, that there is no time when there are not some boroughs entirely unrepresented. These gross defects in our representation have struck all sensible men very forcibly; even Dr. Paley, a courtly writer in the main, declares the bulk of the inhabitants of this country have little more concern in the appointment of parliament, than the subjects of the Grand Seignior at Constantinople.

On the propriety of the several plans which have been proposed to remedy these evils, it is not for me to decide; I shall choose rather to point out two general principles which ought, in my opinion, to pervade every plan of parliamentary reform; the first of which respects the mode of election, the second the independence of the elected. In order to give the people a true representation, let its basis be enlarged, and the duration of parliaments shortened. The first of these improvements would diminish bribery and corruption, lessen the violence and tumult of elections, and secure to the people a real and unequivocal organ for the expression of their sentiments.

Were every householder in town and country permitted to vote, the number of electors would be so great, that as no art or industry would be able to bias their minds, so no sums of money would be sufficient to win their suffrages. The plan which the Duke of Richmond recommended was, if I mistake not, still more comprehensive, including all that were of age, except menial servants. By this means the different passions and prejudices of men would check each other, the predominance of any particular or local interest be kept down, and

* Many of these extraordinary anomalies, so long acknowledged, and their baneful effects so often lamented, are corrected and removed by the 'Reform Bill,' which, with the king's concurrence, was brought into parliament under the administration of Earl Grey, and received the Royal assent June 7th, 1832.—Ed.

from the whole there would result that *general impression* which would convey with precision the unbiased sense of the people.

But besides this, another great improvement, in my opinion, would be, to shorten the duration of parliament, by bringing it back to one year. The *Michel Gemote*, or great council of the kingdom, was appointed to meet under Alfred twice a year, and by divers ancient statutes after the Conquest, the king was bound to summon a parliament every year, or oftener, if need be; when, to remedy the looseness of this latter phrase, by the 16th of Charles the Second it was enacted, the holding of parliaments should not be intermitted above three years at most; and in the first of King William, it is declared as one of the rights of the people, that for redress of all grievances, and preserving the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently; which was again reduced to a certainty by another statute, which enacts, that a new parliament shall be called within three years after the termination of the former. To this term did they continue limited till the reign of George the First; when, after the rebellion of 1715, the septennial act was passed, under the pretence of diminishing the expense of elections, and preserving the kingdom against the designs of the Pretender. A noble Lord * observed, on that occasion, he was at an utter loss to describe the nature of this prolonged parliament, unless he were allowed to borrow a phrase from the Athanasian Creed; for it was "neither created, nor begotten, but proceeding." Without disputing the upright intentions of the authors of this act, it is plain, they might on the same principle have voted themselves perpetual, and their conduct will ever remain a monument of that short-sightedness in politics, which, in providing for the pressure of the moment, puts to hazard the liberty and happiness of future times. It is intolerable, that in so large a space of a man's life as seven years, he should never be able to correct the error he may have committed in the choice of a representative, but be compelled to see him every year dipping deeper into corruption; a helpless spectator of the contempt of his interests, and the ruin of his country. During the present period of parliaments a nation may sustain the greatest

* The Earl of Peterborough.

possible changes; may descend by a succession of ill counsels, from the highest pinnacle of its fortunes to the lowest point of depression; its treasure exhausted, its credit sunk, and its weight almost completely annihilated in the scale of empire. Ruin and felicity are seldom dispensed by the same hand, nor is it likely any succour in calamity should flow from the wisdom and virtue of those by whose folly and wickedness it was inflicted.

The union between a representative and his constituents ought to be strict and entire; but the septennial act has rendered it little more than nominal. The duration of parliament sets its members at a distance from the people, begets a notion of independence, and gives the minister so much leisure to insinuate himself into their graces, that before the period is expired, they become very mild and complying. Sir Robert Walpole used to say, that "every man had his price;" a maxim on which he relied with so much security, that he declared he seldom troubled himself with the election of members, but rather chose to stay and buy them up when they came to market. A very interesting work, lately published, entitled, 'Anecdotes of Lord Chatham,' unfolds some parts of this mystery of iniquity, which the reader will probably think equally new and surprising. There is a regular office, it seems, that of manager of the House of Commons, which generally devolves on one of the secretaries of state, and consists in securing, at all events, a majority in parliament by a judicious application of promises and bribes. The sums disbursed by this honourable office are involved under the head of Secret Service Money; and so delicate is this employment of manager of the House of Commons considered, that we have an account in the above-mentioned treatise, of a new arrangement of ministry, which failed for no other reason than that the different parties could not agree on the proper person to fill it.*

* As I have taken my information on this head entirely on the authority of the work called 'Anecdotes of Lord Chatham,' the reader may not be displeased with the following extract from vol. ii. page 121. "The management of the House of Commons, as it is called, is a confidential department unknown to the constitution. In the public accounts it is immersed under the head of secret service money. It is usually given to the secretary of state when that post is filled by a commoner. The business of the department is to distribute with *art* and *policy*

This secret influence which prevails must be allowed to be extremely disgraceful; nor can it ever be effectually remedied, but by contracting the duration of parliaments.

If it be objected to annual parliaments, that by this means the tumult and riot attendant on elections will be oftener repeated; it ought to be remembered, that their duration is the chief source of these disorders. Render a seat in the House of Commons of less value, and you diminish at once the violence of the struggle. In America, the election of representatives takes place throughout that vast continent, in one day, with the greatest tranquillity.

In a mixed constitution like ours, it is impossible to estimate the importance of an independent parliament; for as it is here our freedom consists, if this barrier to the encroachments of arbitrary power once fails, we can oppose no other. Should the king attempt to govern without a parliament, or should the upper house pretend to legislate independently of the lower, we should immediately take the alarm; but, if the House of Commons falls insensibly under the control of the other two branches of the legislature, our danger is greater, because our apprehensions are less. The forms of a free constitution surviving, when its spirit is extinct, would perpetuate slavery by rendering it more concealed and secure. On this account, I apprehend, did Montesquieu predict the loss of our freedom, from the legislative power becoming more corrupt than the executive; a crisis to which, if it has not arrived already, it is hastening apace. The immortal Locke, far from looking with the indifference too common on the abuses in our representation, considered all improper influence exerted in that quarter as threatening the very dissolution of government. *Thus*, says he, *to regulate candidates and electors, and new model the ways of election, what is it but to cut up the government by the roots, and poison the very fountain of public security?*

No enormity can subsist long without meeting with advocates; on which account we need not wonder, that the cor-

amongst the members who have no ostensible places, sums of money for their support during the session; besides contracts, lottery tickets, and other douceurs. It is no uncommon circumstance, at the end of a session, for a gentleman to receive five hundred or a thousand pounds for *his services.*"

ruption of parliament has been justified under the mild denomination of influence, though it must pain every virtuous mind to see the enlightened Paley engaged in its defence. If a member votes consistently with his convictions, his conduct, in that instance, has not been determined by influence; but if he votes otherwise, give it what gentle name you please, he forfeits his integrity; nor is it possible to mark the boundaries which should limit his compliance; for if he may deviate a little, to attain the See of Winchester, he may certainly step a little farther, to reach the dignity of a Primate. How familiar must the practice of corruption have become, when a philosophical moralist, a minister of religion, of great talents and virtue, in the calm retirement of his study, does not hesitate to become its public apologist?

The necessity of a reform in the constitution of parliament is in nothing more obvious than in the ascendancy of the aristocracy. This colossus bestrides both houses of parliament; legislates in one, and exerts a domineering influence over the other. It is humiliating, at the approach of an election, to see a whole county send a deputation to an Earl or Duke, and beg a representative as you would beg an alms. A multitude of laws have been framed, it is true, to prevent all interference of peers in elections; but they neither are nor can be effectual, while the House of Commons opens its doors to their sons and brothers. If our liberty depends on the balance and control of the respective orders in the state, it must be extremely absurd to blend them together, by placing the father in one department of the legislature, and his family in the other.

Freedom is supposed by some to derive great security from the existence of a regular opposition; an expedient which is, in my opinion, both the offspring and the cherisher of faction. That a minister should be opposed when his measures are destructive to his country can admit of no doubt: that a systematic opposition should be maintained against any man, merely as a minister, without regard to the principles he may profess, or the measures he may propose, which is intended by a regular opposition, appears to me a most corrupt and unprincipled maxim. When a legislative assembly is thus thrown into parties distinguished by no leading principle, however warm and animated their debates, it is plain they

display only a struggle for the emoluments of office. This the people discern, and in consequence listen with very little attention to the representations of the minister on the one hand, or the minority on the other; being persuaded the only real difference between them is, that the one is anxious to gain what the other is anxious to keep. If a measure be good, it is of no importance to the nation from whom it proceeds; yet will it be esteemed by the opposition a point of honour not to let it pass without throwing every obstruction in its way. If we listen to the minister for the time being, the nation is always flourishing and happy; if we hearken to the opposition, it is a chance if it be not on the brink of destruction. In an assembly convened to deliberate on the affairs of a nation, how disgusting to hear the members perpetually talk of their connexions, and their resolution to act with a particular set of men, when, if they have happened by chance to vote according to their convictions rather than their party, half their speeches are made up of apologies for a conduct so new and unexpected! When they see men united who agree in nothing but their hostility to the minister, the people fall at first into amazement and irresolution; till perceiving political debate is a mere scramble for profit and power, they endeavour to become as corrupt as their betters. It is not in that roar of faction which deafens the ear and sickens the heart the still voice of Liberty is heard. She turns from the disgusting scene, and regards these struggles as the pangs and convulsions in which she is doomed to expire.

The era of parties, flowing from the animation of freedom, is ever followed by an era of faction, which marks its feebleness and decay. Parties are founded on *principle*, factions on *men*; under the first, the people are contending respecting the system that shall be pursued; under the second, they are candidates for servitude, and are only debating *whose livery* they shall wear. The purest times of the Roman republic were distinguished by violent dissensions; but they consisted in the jealousy of the several *orders* of the state among each other; on the ascendance of the patricians on the one side, and the plebeians on the other; a useful struggle, which maintained the balance and equipoise of the constitution. In the progress of corruption things took a turn; the permanent

parties which sprang from the fixed principles of government were lost, and the citizens arranged themselves under the standard of particular leaders, being banded into factions under Marius or Sylla, Cæsar or Pompey; while the republic stood by without any interest in the dispute, a passive and helpless victim. The crisis of the fall of freedom in different nations, with respect to the causes that produce it, is extremely uniform. After the manner of the ancient factions, we hear much in England of the Bedford party; the Rockingham party; the Portland party; when it would puzzle the wisest man to point out their political distinction. The useful jealousy of the separate orders is extinct, being all melted down and blended into one mass of corruption. The House of Commons looks with no jealousy on the House of Lords, nor the House of Lords on the House of Commons; the struggle in both is maintained by the ambition of powerful individuals and families, between whom the kingdom is thrown as the prize, and the moment they unite, they perpetuate its subjection and divide its spoils.

From a late instance, we see they quarrel only about the partition of the prey, but are unanimous in defending it. To the honour of Mr. Fox, and the band of illustrious patriots of which he is the leader, it will however be remembered, that they stood firm against a host of opponents, when, assailed by every species of calumny and invective, they had nothing to expect but the reproaches of the present, and the admiration of all future times. If any thing can rekindle the sparks of Freedom, it will be the flame of their eloquence; if any thing can reanimate her faded form, it will be the vigour of such minds.

The disordered state of our representation, it is acknowledged on all hands, must be remedied, some time or other; but it is contended, that it would be improper at present, on account of the political ferment that occupies the minds of men, and the progress of republican principles; a plausible objection, if delay can restore public tranquillity; but unless I am greatly mistaken, it will have just a contrary effect. It is hard to conceive how the discontent that flows from the abuses of government can be allayed by their being perpetuated. If they are of such a nature that they can neither be palliated or denied, and are made the ground of invective

against the whole of our constitution, are not they its best friends who wish to cut off this occasion of scandal and complaint? The *theory* of our constitution, we say, and justly, has been the admiration of the world; the cavils of its enemies, then, derive their force entirely from the disagreement between that theory and its practice; nothing therefore remains, but to bring them as near as human affairs will admit to a perfect correspondence. This will cut up faction by the roots, and immediately distinguish those who wish to reform the constitution from those who wish its subversion. Since the abuses are real, the longer they are continued the more they will be known; the discontented will be always gaining ground, and, though repulsed, will return to the charge with redoubled vigour and advantage. Let reform be considered as a chirurgical operation, if you please; but since the constitution must undergo it or die, it is best to submit before the remedy becomes as dangerous as the disease. The example drawn from a neighbouring kingdom, as an argument for delay, ought to teach us a contrary lesson. Had the encroachments of arbitrary power been steadily resisted, and remedies been applied as evils appeared, instead of piling them up as precedents, the disorders of government could never have arisen to that enormous height, nor would the people have been impelled to the dire necessity of building the whole fabric of political society afresh. It seems an infatuation in governments, that in tranquil times they treat the people with contempt, and turn a deaf ear to their complaints; till, public resentment kindling, they find, when it is too late, that, in their eagerness to retain every thing, they have lost all.

The pretences of Mr. Pitt and his friends for delaying this great business are so utterly inconsistent, that it is too plain they are averse in reality to its ever taking place. When Mr. Pitt is reminded that he himself, at the beginning of his ministry, recommended parliamentary reform, he replies, it was necessary then, on account of the calamitous state of the nation, just emerged from an unsuccessful war, and filled with gloom and disquiet. But, unless the people are libelled, they now are still more discontented; with this difference, that their uneasiness formerly arose from events but remotely connected with unequal representation; but that this is now

the chief ground of complaint. It is absurd, however, to rest the propriety of reform on any turn of public affairs. If it be not requisite to secure our freedom, it is vain and useless; but if it be a proper means of preserving that blessing, the nation will need it as much in peace as in war. When we wish to retain those habits which we know it were best to relinquish, we are extremely ready to be soothed with momentary pretences for delay, though they appear, on reflection, to be drawn from quite opposite topics, and therefore to be equally applicable to all times and seasons.

A similar delusion is practised in the conduct of public affairs. If the people be tranquil and composed, and have not caught the passion of reform, it is impolitic, say the ministry, to disturb their minds, by agitating a question that lies at rest; if they are awakened, and touched with a conviction of the abuse, we must wait, say they, till the ferment subsides, and not lessen our dignity by seeming to yield to popular clamour: if we are at peace, and commerce flourishes, it is concluded we cannot need any improvement in circumstances so prosperous and happy; if, on the other hand, we are at war, and our affairs unfortunate, an amendment in the representation is dreaded, as it would seem an acknowledgment that our calamities flowed from the ill conduct of parliament. Now, as the nation must always be in one or other of these situations, the conclusion is, the period of reform can never arrive at all.

This pretence for delay will appear the more extraordinary in the British ministry, from a comparison of the exploits they have performed with the task they decline. They have found time for involving us in millions of debt; for cementing a system of corruption that reaches from the cabinet to the cottage; for carrying havoc and devastation to the remotest extremities of the globe; for accumulating taxes which famish the peasant and reward the parasite; for bandying the whole kingdom into factions, to the ruin of all virtue and public spirit; for the completion of these achievements they have suffered no opportunity to escape them. Elementary treatises on time mention various arrangements and divisions, but none have ever touched on the chronology of statesmen. These are a generation who measure their time not so much by the revolutions of the sun, as by the revolutions of power.

There are two æras particularly marked in their calendar; the one the period they are in the ministry, and the other when they are out; which have a very different effect on their sentiments and reasoning. Their course commences in the character of friends to the people, whose grievances they display in all the colours of variegated diction. But the moment they step over the threshold of St. James's, they behold every thing in a new light; the taxes seem lessened, the people rise from their depression, the nation flourishes in peace and plenty, and every attempt at improvement is like heightening the beauties of paradise, or mending the air of elysium.

Section IV.

On Theories, and the Rights of Man.

Among the many alarming symptoms of the present time, it is not the least that there is a prevailing disposition to hold in contempt the *Theory* of liberty as false and visionary. For my own part, it is my determination never to be deterred by an obnoxious name from an open avowal of any principles that appear useful and important. Were the ridicule now cast on the Rights of Man confined to a mere phrase, as the title of a book, it were of little consequence; but when *that* is made the pretence for deriding the doctrine itself, it is a matter of serious alarm.

To place the rights of man as the basis of lawful government, is not peculiar to Mr. Paine; but was done more than a century ago by men of no less eminence than Sidney and Locke. It is therefore extremely disingenuous to impute the system to Mr. Paine as its author. His structure may be false and erroneous, but the foundation was laid by other hands. That there are *natural rights*, or in other words a certain liberty which men may exercise, independent of permission from society, can scarcely be doubted by those who comprehend the meaning of the terms. Every man must have a natural right to use his limbs in what manner he pleases that is not injurious to another. In like manner he must have a right to worship God after the mode he thinks acceptable; or in other words, he ought not to be compelled to consult anything but his own conscience. These are a specimen of those

rights which may properly be termed *natural;* for, as philosophers speak of the primary qualities of matter, they cannot be increased or diminished. We cannot conceive the right of using our limbs to be created by society, or to be rendered more complete by any human agreement or compact.

But there still remains a question, whether this natural liberty must not be considered as entirely relinquished when we become members of society. It is pretended, that the moment we quit a state of *nature*, as we have given up the control of our actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles, but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society. These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and fashion to certain tenets which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult, but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a masterpiece of pathetic composition; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours "dipt in heaven," that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is, in truth, only too prolific; a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts, like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation.

His intellectual views in general, however, are wide and variegated, rather than distinct; and the light he has let in on the British constitution in particular, resembles the coloured effulgence of a painted medium, a kind of mimic twilight, solemn and soothing to the senses, but better fitted for ornament than use.

A book has lately been published, under the title of 'Happiness and Rights,' written by Mr. Hey, a respectable member of the University of Cambridge, whose professed object is, with Mr. Burke, to overturn the doctrine of natural rights.

The few remarks I may make upon it are less on account of any merit in the work itself, than on account of its author, who, being a member of considerable standing in the most liberal of our universities, may be presumed to speak the sentiments of that learned body. The chief difference between his theory and Mr. Burke's seems to be the denial of the existence of any rights that can be denominated natural, which Mr. Burke only supposes *resigned* on the formation of political society. *The rights*, says Mr. Hey, *I can conjecture (for it is but a conjecture) to belong to me as a mere man, are so uncertain, and comparatively so unimportant, while the rights I feel myself possessed of in civil society are so great, so numerous, and many of them so well defined, that I am strongly inclined to consider society as creating or giving my rights, rather than recognizing and securing what I could have claimed if I had lived in an unconnected state.* —(p. 137.)

As government implies restraint, it is plain a portion of our freedom is given up by entering into it; the only question can then be, how far this resignation extends,—whether to a part, or to the whole? This point may, perhaps, be determined by the following reflections:

1. The advantages that civil power can procure to a community are *partial*. A small part, in comparison of the condition of man, can fall within its influence. Allowing it to be a rational institution, it must have that end in view which a reasonable man would propose by appointing it; nor can it imply any greater sacrifice than is strictly necessary to its attainment. But on what account is it requisite to unite in political society? Plainly to guard against the injury of others; for, were there no injustice among mankind, no protection would be needed; no *public force* necessary; every man might be left without restraint or control. The attainment of all possible good, then, is *not* the purpose of laws, but to secure us from external injury and violence; and as the means must be proportioned to the end, it is absurd to suppose that, by submitting to civil power, with a view to some *particular* benefits, we should be understood to hold all our advantages dependent upon that authority. Civil restraints imply nothing more than a surrender of our liberty in some points, in order to maintain it undisturbed in others

of more importance. Thus we give up the liberty by repelling force by force, in return for a more equal administration of justice than private resentment would permit. But there are some rights which cannot with any propriety be yielded up to human authority, because they are perfectly consistent with every benefit its appointment can procure. The free use of our faculties in distinguishing truth from falsehood, the exertion of corporeal powers without injury to others, the choice of a religion and worship, are branches of natural freedom which no government can justly alter or diminish, because their restraint cannot conduce to that security which is its proper object. Government, like every other contrivance, has a *specific* end; it implies the resignation of just as much liberty as is needful to attain it; whatever is demanded more is superfluous, a species of tyranny which ought to be corrected by withdrawing it. The relation of master and servant, of pupil and instructor, of the respective members of a family to their head, all include some restraint, some abridgment of natural liberty. But in these cases, it is not pretended that the surrender is total; and why should this be supposed to take place in political society, which is *one* of the relations of human life? this would be to render the foundation infinitely broader than the superstructure.

2. From the notion that political society precludes an appeal to natural rights, the greatest absurdities must ensue. If that idea be just, it is improper to say of any administration that it is despotic or oppressive, unless it has receded from its first form and model. Civil power can never exceed its limits, until it deviates into a new track. For, if every portion of natural freedom be given up by yielding to civil authority, we can never claim any other liberties than those precise ones which were ascertained in its first formation. The vassals of despotism may complain, perhaps, of the hardships which they suffer, but, unless it appear they are of *a new kind*, no injury is done them, for no right is violated. Rights are either natural or artificial; the first cannot be pleaded after they are relinquished, and the second cannot be impaired but by a departure from ancient precedents. If a man should be unfortunate enough to live under the dominion of a prince, who, like the monarchs of Persia, could murder his subjects at will,

he may be unhappy, but cannot complain; for, on Mr. Hey's theory, he never had any rights but what were created by society, and on Mr. Burke's he has for ever relinquished them. The claims of *nature* being set aside, and the constitution of the government despotic from the beginning, his misery involves no injustice, and admits of no remedy. It requires little discernment to see that this theory rivets the chains of despotism, and shuts out from the political world the smallest glimpse of emancipation or improvement. Its language is, he that is a slave, let him be a slave still.

3. It is incumbent on Mr. Burke and his followers to ascertain the *time* when natural rights are relinquished. Mr. Hey is content with tracing their existence to society, while Mr. Burke, the more moderate of the two, admitting their foundation in nature, only contends that regular government absorbs and swallows them up, bestowing artificial advantages in exchange. But at what period, it may be inquired, shall we date this wonderful revolution in the social condition of man? If we say it was as early as the first dawn of society, natural liberty had never any existence at all, since there are no traces, even in tradition, of a period when men were utterly unconnected with each other. If we say this complete surrender took place with the first rudiments of law and government in every particular community, on what principle were subsequent improvements introduced? Mr. Burke is fond of resting our liberties on Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; but he ought to remember that as they do not carry us to the commencement of our government, which was established ages before, our forefathers had long ago resigned their natural liberty. If those famous stipulations only recognised such privileges as were in force before, they have no claim to be considered as the foundations of our constitution; but if they formed an *æra* in the annals of freedom, they must have been erected on the basis of those natural rights which Mr. Burke ridicules and explodes. When our ancestors made those demands, it is evident they did not suppose an appeal to the rights of nature precluded. Every step a civilized nation can take towards a more equal administration, is either an assertion of its natural liberty, or a criminal encroachment on just authority. The influence of government on the stock of natural rights may be compared to that of a manufactory on the rude produce; it

adds nothing to its quantity, but only qualifies and fits it for use. Political arrangement is more or less perfect in proportion as it enables us to exert our natural liberty to the greatest advantage; if it is diverted to any other purpose, it is made the instrument of gratifying the passions of a few, or imposes greater restraint than its object prescribes; it degenerates into tyranny and oppression.

The greatest objection to these principles is their perspicuity, which makes them ill relished by those whose interest it is to hide the nature of government from vulgar eyes, and induce a persuasion that it is a secret which can only be unfolded to the *initiated* under the conduct of Mr. Burke, the great *Hierophant* and revealer of the mysteries. A mystery and a trick are generally two sides of the same object, according as it is turned to the view of the beholder.

The doctrine of Mr. Locke and his followers is founded on the natural equality of mankind; for as no man can have any natural or inherent right to rule any more than another, it necessarily follows that a claim to dominion, wherever it is lodged, must be ultimately referred back to the explicit or implied consent of the people. Whatever source of civil authority is assigned different from this, will be found to resolve itself into *mere force*. But as the natural equality of one generation is the same with that of another, the people have always the same right to new model their government, and set aside their rulers. This right, like every other, may be exerted capriciously and absurdly; but no human power can have any pretensions to intercept its exercise. For civil rulers cannot be considered as having any claims that are co-extended with those of the people, nor as forming a party separate from the nation. They are appointed by the community to *execute* its will, not to *oppose* it; to manage the *public*, not to pursue any *private* or *particular* interests. Are all the existing authorities in a state to lie then, it may be said, at the mercy of the populace, liable to be dissipated by the first breath of public discontent? By no means; they are to be respected and obeyed as interpreters of the public will. Till they are set aside by the unequivocal voice of the people, they are a law to every member of the community. To resist them is rebellion; and for any particular set of men to attempt their subversion by force is a heinous crime, as they represent and

embody the collective majesty of the state. They are the exponents, to use the language of algebra, of the precise quantity of liberty the people have thought fit to legalize and secure. But though they are a law to every member of the society, separately considered, they cannot bind the society itself, or prevent it, when it shall think proper, from forming an entire new arrangement; a right that no compact can alienate or diminish, and which has been exerted as often as a free government has been formed. On this account, in resolving the right of dominion into compact, Mr. Locke appears to me somewhat inconsistent, or he has expressed himself with less clearness and accuracy than was usual with that great philosopher. There must have been a previous right to insist on stipulations in those who formed them; nor is there any reason why one race of men is not as competent to that purpose as another.

With the enemies of freedom, it is a usual artifice to represent the sovereignty of the people as a licence to anarchy and disorder. But the tracing up civil power to that source will not diminish our obligation to obey; it only explains its reasons, and settles it on clear determinate principles. It turns blind submission into rational obedience, tempers the passion for liberty with the love of order, and places mankind in a happy medium, between the extremes of anarchy on the one side, and oppression on the other. It is the polar star that will conduct us safe over the ocean of political debate and speculation, the law of laws, the legislator of legislators.

To reply to all the objections that have been advanced against this doctrine would be a useless task, and exhaust the patience of the reader; but there is one drawn from the idea of a majority, much insisted on by Mr. Burke and Mr. Hey, of which the latter gentleman is so enamoured, that he has spread it out into a multitude of pages. They assert, that the theory of natural rights can never be realised, because every member of the community cannot concur in the choice of a government, and the minority being compelled to yield to the decisions of the majority, are under tyrannical restraint. To this reasoning it is a sufficient answer, that, if a number of men act together at all, the necessity of being determined by the sense of the majority, in the last resort, is so obvious, that it is always implied. An exact concurrence of many par-

ticular wills is impossible; and therefore, when each taken separately has precisely the same influence, there can be no hardship in suffering the result to remain at issue, till it is determined by the coincidence of the greater number. The idea of *natural liberty*, at least, is so little violated by this method of proceeding, that it is no more than what takes place every day in the smallest society, where the necessity of being determined by the voice of the majority is so plain, that it is scarcely ever reflected upon. The defenders of the rights of man mean not to contend for impossibilities. We never hear of a right to fly, or to make two and two five. If the majority of a nation approve its government, it is, in this respect, as free as the smallest association or club; anything beyond which must be visionary and romantic.

The next objection Mr. Hey insists upon, is, if possible, still more frivolous, turning on the case of young persons during minority. He contends, that as some of these have more sense than may be found among common mechanics, and the lowest of the people, *natural right* demands their inclinations to be consulted in political arrangements. Were there any method of ascertaining exactly the degree of understanding possessed by young persons during their minority, so as to distinguish early intellects from the less mature, there would be some force in the objection; in the present case the whole supposition is no more than one of those chimeras which this gentleman is ever fond of combating, with the same gravity, and to as little purpose, as Don Quixote his windmill.

The period of minority, it is true, varies in different countries, and is, perhaps, best determined everywhere by ancient custom and habit. An early maturity may confer on sixteen more sagacity than is sometimes found at sixty; but what then? A wise government, having for its object human nature at large, will be adapted, not to its accidental deviations, but to its usual aspects and appearances. For an answer to his argument against natural rights, drawn from the exclusion of women from political power, I beg leave to refer the author to the ingenious Miss Wolstonecroft, the eloquent patroness of female claims; unless, perhaps, every other empire may appear mean in the estimation of those who possess, with an uncontrolled authority, the empire of the heart.

"The situation," says Mr. Hey (p. 137), "in which "any man finds himself placed, when he arrives at the power "of reflecting, appears to be the consequence of a vast train "of events, extending backwards, hundreds or thousands "of years, for aught he can tell, and totally baffling all the "attempts at comprehension by human faculties."

From hence he concludes, "All inquiry into the rights of "man should be forborne. What rights this Being (God) may "have possibly intended that I might claim from beings like "myself, if he had thought proper that I had lived amongst "them in an *unconnected* state, that is to say, what are the "rights of a mere *man*, appears a question involved in such "obscurity, that I cannot trace even any indication of that "Being having intended me to inquire into it."

If any thing be intended by these observations, it is, that we ought never to attempt to ameliorate our condition till we are perfectly acquainted with its causes. But as the subjects of the worst government are probably as ignorant of the train of events for some thousands of years back, as those who enjoy the best, they are to rest contented, it seems, until they can clear up that obscurity, and inquire no farther.

It would seem strange to presume an inference good, from not knowing how we arrived at it. Yet this seems as reasonable as to suppose the political circumstances of a people fit and proper, on account of our inability to trace the causes that produced them. To know the source of an evil is only of consequence as it may chance to conduct us to the remedy. But the whole paragraph I have quoted betrays the utmost perplexity of thought; confounding the *civil condition* of individuals with the political institution of a society. The former will be infinitely various in the same community, arising from the different character, temper, and success of its members: the latter unites and pervades the whole, nor can any abuses attach to it but what may be displayed and remedied.

It is perfectly disingenuous in this author to represent his adversaries as desirous of committing the business of legislation indiscriminately to the meanest of mankind.* He well

* "A man whose hands and ideas have been usefully confined for thirty or forty years to the labour and management of a farm, or the construction of a wall, or piece of cloth, does indeed, in one respect, appear

knows the wildest democratical writer contends for nothing more than popular government by *representation*. If the labouring part of the people are not competent to *choose* legislators, the English constitution is essentially wrong; especially in its present state, where the importance of each vote is enhanced by the paucity of the electors.

After the many examples of misrepresentation which this author has furnished, his declamations on the levelling system cannot be matter of surprise. An equality of rights is perfectly consistent with the utmost disproportion between the objects to which they extend. A peasant may have the same right to the exertion of his faculties with a Newton; but this will not fill up the vast chasm that separates them.

The ministry will feel great obligations to Mr. Hey for putting off the evil day of reform to a far distant period—a period so remote, that they may hope, before it is completed, their names and their actions will be buried in friendly oblivion. He indulges a faint expectation, he tells us, that the practice of governments may be improved *in two or three thousand years.*

A smaller edition of this work has lately been published, considerably abridged, for the use of the poor, who, it may be feared, will be very little benefited by its perusal. Genius may dazzle, eloquence may persuade, reason may convince; but to render popular cold and comfortless sophistry, unaided by those powers, is a hopeless attempt.

I have trespassed, I am afraid, too far on the patience of my readers, in attempting to expose the fallacies by which the followers of Mr. Burke perplex the understanding, and endeavour to hide in obscurity the true sources of political power. Were there indeed any impropriety in laying them open, the blame would not fall on the friends of freedom, but on the provocation afforded by the extravagance and absurdity of its enemies. If princely power had never been raised to a level with the attributes of the divinity by Filmer it

superior to an infant three months old. The man could make a law of some sort or other; the infant could not. The man could, in any particular circumstances of a nation, say those words, We will go to war, or we will not go to war; the infant could not. But the difference between them is more in appearance than in any useful reality. The man is totally unqualified to judge what ought to be enacted for laws."—Hey, p. 31.

had probably never been sunk as low as popular acquiescence by Locke. The confused mixture of liberty and oppression which ran through the feudal system prevented the theory of government from being closely inspected: particular rights were secured; but the relation of the people to their rulers was never explained on its just principles, till the transfer of superstition to civil power shocked the common sense of mankind, and awakened their inquiries. They drew aside the veil, and where they were taught to expect a mystery they discerned a fraud. There is, however, no room to apprehend any evil from political investigation, that will not be greatly overbalanced by its advantages. For, besides that truth is always beneficial, tame submission to usurped power has hitherto been the malady of human nature. The dispersed situation of mankind, their indolence and inattention, and the opposition of their passions and interests, are circumstances which render it extremely difficult for them to combine in resisting tyranny with success. In the field of government, as in that of the world, *the tares of despotism were sown while men slept!* The necessity of regular government, under some form or other, is so pressing, that the evil of anarchy is of short duration. Rapid, violent, destructive in its course, it is an inundation which, fed by no constant spring, soon dries up and disappears. The misfortune on these occasions is, that the people for want of understanding the principles of liberty, seldom reach the true source of their misery; but, after committing a thousand barbarities, only change their masters, when they should change their system.

Section V.

On Dissenters.

Of that foul torrent of insult and abuse, which it has lately been the lot of the friends of liberty to sustain, a larger portion hath fallen to the share of dissenters than any other description of men. Their sentiments have been misrepresented, their loyalty suspected, and their most illustrious characters held up to derision and contempt. The ashes of the dead have been as little spared as the merit of the living; and the same breath that has attempted to depreciate the talents and virtues

of a Priestley, is employed to blacken the memory of a Price. The effusions of a distempered loyalty are mingled with execrations on that unfortunate sect; as if the attachment to the king were to be measured by the hatred to dissenters. Without any shadow of criminality, they are doomed to sustain perpetual insult and reproach; their repose disturbed, and their lives threatened and endangered. If dissent be, in truth, a crime of such magnitude that it must not be tolerated, let there be at least a punishment prescribed by law, that they may know what they have to expect, and not lie at the mercy of an enraged and deluded populace. It is natural to inquire into the cause of this extreme virulence against a particular class of the community, who are distinguished from others only by embracing a different form and system of worship.

In the practice of moral virtues, it will hardly be denied that they are at least as exemplary as their neighbours; while, in the more immediate duties of religion, if there be any distinction, it lies in their carrying to a greater height sentiments of seriousness and devotion. The nature of their *public conduct* will best appear from a rapid survey of some of those great political events in which it has had room to display itself; where, though our history has been ransacked to supply invective, it will be seen, their merits more than compensate for any errors they may have committed. Their zeal in opposing Charles I. has been an eternal theme of reproach; but it should be remembered, that when that resistance first took place, the parliament consisted for the most part of churchmen, and was fully justified in its opposition, by the arbitrary measures of the court. Had the pretensions of Charles been patiently acquiesced in, our government had long ago been despotic.

What medium might have been found between tame submission and open hostility, and whether matters were not afterwards pushed to an extremity against the unfortunate monarch, it is not for me to determine, nor does it concern the vindication of dissenters. For long before the final catastrophe which issued in the king's death, the favourable intentions of parliament were overruled by the ascendancy of Cromwell; the parliament itself oppressed by his arms, and the influence both of churchmen and dissenters bent under military usurpation. The execution of Charles was

the deed of a faction, condemned by the great body of the puritans as a criminal severity. But whatever blame they may be supposed to have incurred on account of their conduct to Charles, the merit of restoring monarchy in his son was all their own. The entire force of the empire was in their hands; Monk himself of their party; the parliament, the army, all puritans; yet were they disinterested enough to call the heir to the throne, and yield the reins into his hands, with no other stipulation than that of liberty of conscience, which he violated with a baseness and ingratitude peculiar to his character. All the return he made them for the recovery of his power, consisted in depriving two thousand of their ministers, and involving the whole body in a persecution, by which not less than ten thousand are supposed to have perished in imprisonment and want. But their patriotism was not to be shaken by these injuries. When, towards the latter end of Charles the Second's reign, the character of his successor inspired a dread of the establishment of popery, to avert that evil they cheerfully acquiesced in an exclusion from all places of emolument and trust; an extraordinary instance of magnanimity. When James the Second began to display arbitrary views, dissenters were among the first to take the alarm, regarding with jealousy even an indulgence when it flowed from a dispensing power. The zeal with which they co-operated in bringing about the revolution, the ardour with which they have always espoused its principles, are too well known to need any proof, and can only be rendered more striking by a contrast with the conduct of the high church party. The latter maintained, in its utmost extent, the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance; were incessantly engaged in intrigues to overturn the revolution; and affirmed the doctrine of divine right to be an ancient and indisputable tenet of the English Church. Whoever wishes to ascertain the existence of those arts by which they embroiled the reign of King William, may see them displayed at large in Burnet's History of his own Times.

The attachment of dissenters to the house of Hanover was signalized in a manner too remarkable to be soon forgotten. In the rebellions of fifteen and forty-five, they ventured on a breach of the law, by raising and officering regiments out of their own body; for which the parliament were reduced to

the awkward expedient of passing an act of indemnity. This short sketch of their political conduct, as it is sufficient to establish their loyalty beyond suspicion, so may it well augment our surprise at the extreme obloquy and reproach with which they are treated. Mr. Hume, a competent judge, if ever there was one, of political principles, and who was far from being partial to dissenters, candidly confesses that to them we are indebted for the preservation of liberty.

The religious opinions of dissenters are so various, that there is perhaps no point in which they are agreed, except in asserting the rights of conscience against all human control and authority. From the time of Queen Elizabeth, under whom they began to make their appearance, their views of religious liberty have gradually extended, commencing at first with a disapprobation of certain rites and ceremonies, the remains of papal superstition. Their total separation from the church did not take place for more than a century after; till, despairing of seeing it erected on a comprehensive plan, and being moreover persecuted for their difference of sentiment, they were compelled at last, reluctantly to withdraw. Having been thus directed by a train of events into the right path, they pushed their principles to their legitimate consequences, and began to discern the impropriety of all religious establishments whatever, a sentiment in which they are now nearly united. On this very account, however, of all men they are least likely to disturb the peace of society; for they claim no other liberty than what they wish the whole human race to possess, that of deciding on every question where conscience is concerned. It is sufferance they plead for, not establishment; protection, not splendour. A disposition to impose their religion on others cannot be suspected in men whose distinguishing religious tenet is the disavowal of all human authority.

Their opinion respecting establishments is founded upon reasons which appear to them weighty and solid. They have remarked, that in the three first and purest ages of religion, the church was a stranger to any alliance with temporal powers; that, far from needing their aid, Christianity never flourished so much as while they were combined to suppress it; and that the protection of Constantine, though well intended, diminished its purity more than it added to its splendour.

The only pretence for uniting Christianity with civil government is the support it yields to the peace and good order of society. But this benefit will be derived from it, at least in as great a degree, without an establishment as with it. Religion, if it has any power, operates on the *conscience* of men. Resting solely on the belief of invisible realities, and having for its object the good and evil of eternity, it can derive no additional weight or solemnity from human sanctions; but will appear to the most advantage upon hallowed ground, remote from the noise and tumults of worldly policy. Can it be imagined that a dissenter, who believes in divine revelation, does not feel the same moral restraints as if he had received his religion from the hands of parliament? Human laws may debase Christianity, but can never improve it; and, being able to add nothing to its evidence, they can add nothing to its force.

Happy had it been, however, had civil establishments of religion been *useless* only, instead of being productive of the greatest evils. But, when Christianity is established by law, it is requisite to give the preference to some particular system; and, as the magistrate is no better judge of religion than others, the chances are as great of his lending his sanction to the false as to the true. Splendour and emolument must likewise be in some degree attached to the national church: which are a strong inducement to its ministers to defend it, be it ever so remote from the truth. Thus error becomes permanent, and that set of opinions which happens to prevail when the establishment is formed, continues, in spite of superior light and improvement, to be handed down without alteration from age to age. Hence the disagreement between the public creed of the church and the private sentiments of its ministers; an evil growing out of the very nature of an hierarchy, and not likely to be remedied before it brings the clerical character into the utmost contempt. Hence the rapid spread of infidelity in various parts of Europe; a natural and never-failing consequence of the corrupt alliance between church and state. Wherever we turn our eyes, we shall perceive the depression of religion is in proportion to the elevation of the hierarchy. In France, where the establishment had attained the utmost splendour, piety had utterly decayed; in England, where the hierarchy is less splendid,

more remains of the latter; and in Scotland, whose national church is one of the poorest in the world, a greater sense of religion appears among the inhabitants than in either of the former. It must likewise be plain to every observer, that piety flourishes much more among dissenters, than among the members of any establishment whatever. This progress of things is so natural, that nothing seems to be wanting in any country, to render the thinking part of the people infidels, but a splendid establishment. It will always ultimately debase the clerical character, and perpetuate, both in discipline and doctrine, every error and abuse.

Turn a Christian society into an established church, and it is no longer a voluntary assembly for the worship of God; it is a powerful corporation, full of such sentiments and passions as usually distinguish those bodies; a dread of innovation, an attachment to abuses, a propensity to tyranny and oppression. Hence the convulsions that accompany religious reform, where the truth of the opinions in question is little regarded, amidst the alarm that is felt for the splendour, opulence, and power which they are the means of supporting. To this alliance of Christianity with civil power it is owing that ecclesiastical history presents a chaos of crimes; and that the progress of religious opinions, which, left to itself, had been calm and silent, may be traced in blood.

Among the evils attending the alliance of church and state, it is not the least, that it begets a notion of their interests having some kind of inseparable, though mysterious connexion; so that they who are dissatisfied with the one must be enemies to the other. Our very language is tinctured with this delusion, in which church and king are blended together with an arrogance that seems copied from Cardinal Wolsey's *Ego et rex meus*, I and my king; as if the establishment were of more consequence than the sovereign who represents the collective majesty of the state. Let the interference of civil power be withdrawn, and the animosity of sects will subside for want of materials to inflame it; nor will any man suspect his neighbour for being of a different religion, more than for being of a different complexion from himself. The practice of toleration, it is true, has much abated the violence of those convulsions which, for more than a century from the beginning of the reformation, shook

Europe to its base; but the source and spring of intolerance is by no means exhausted The steam from that infernal pit will issue through the crevices, until they are filled up with the *ruins* of all human establishments.

The alliance between church and state is, in a *political point of view*, extremely suspicious, and much better fitted to the genius of an arbitrary than a free government. To the former it may yield a powerful support; to the latter it must ever prove dangerous. The spiritual submission it exacts is unfavourable to mental vigour, and prepares the way for a servile acquiescence in the encroachments of civil authority. This is so correspondent with *facts*, that the epithet high church, when applied to politics, is familiarly used in our language to convey the notion of arbitrary maxims of government.

As far as submission to civil magistrates is a branch of moral virtue, Christianity will, under every form, be sure to enforce it; for, among the various sects and parties into which its profession is divided, there subsists an entire agreement respecting the moral duties it prescribes. To select, therefore, and endow a *particular order* of clergy to teach the duties of submission, is useless as a mean to secure the peace of a society, though well fitted to produce a slavish subjection. Ministers of that description, considering themselves as allies of the state, yet having no civil department, will be disposed, on all occasions, to strike in with the current of the court; nor are they likely to confine the obligation to obedience within any just and reasonable bounds. They will insensibly become an army of spiritual janizaries. Depending, as they everywhere must, upon the sovereign, his prerogative can never be exalted too high for their emolument, nor can any better instruments be contrived for the accomplishment of arbitrary designs. Their compact and united form, composing a chain of various links which hangs suspended from the throne, admirably fits them for conveying the impression that may soothe, inflame, or mislead the people.

These are the evils which, in my opinion, attach to civil establishments of Christianity. They are, indeed, often mitigated by the virtue of their members; and among the English clergy in particular, as splendid examples of virtue and talents might be produced as any which the annals of

human nature can afford; but in all our reasonings concerning *men*, we must lay it down as a maxim, that the greater part are moulded by circumstances. If we wish to see the *true spirit* of an hierarchy, we have only to attend to the conduct of what is usually termed the high church party.

While they had sufficient influence with the legislature, they impelled it to persecute; and now that a more enlightened spirit has brought that expedient into disgrace, they turn to the people, and endeavour to inflame their minds by the arts of calumny and detraction. When the dissenters applied for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, an alarm was spread of the church being in danger, and their claim was defeated. From the late opposition of the bishops to the repeal of the penal statutes, we learn that they have lost the power rather than the inclination to persecute, or they would be happy to abolish the monuments of a spirit they ceased to approve. The nonsense and absurdity comprised in that part of our laws would move laughter in a company of peasants; but nothing is thought mean or contemptible which is capable of being forged into a weapon of hostility against dissenters. To perpetuate laws which there is no intention to execute, is certainly the way to bring law into contempt; but the truth is, that unwilling to relinquish the right of persecution, though they have no immediate opportunity of exerting it, they retain these statutes as a body in reserve, ready to be brought into the field on the first occasion that shall offer.*

The prejudice entertained against us is not the work of a day, but the accumulation of ages, flowing from the fixed antipathy of a numerous and powerful order of men, distributed through all the classes of society; nor is it easy to conceive to what a pitch popular resentment may be inflamed by artful management and contrivance. Our situation in this respect bears a near resemblance to that of the primitive Christians, against whom, though in themselves the most inoffensive of mankind, the malice of the populace was directed, to a still

* This disgrace to the legislation of a great and free country has at length, but not till more than a third part of a century had elapsed after the above reproach was penned, been finally removed, by an enactment for which the dissenters are especially indebted to the able and zealous exertions of that noble example and advocate of all liberal principles, Lord John Russell.—Ed.

greater degree, by similar arts and upon similar principles. The clamour of the fanatic rabble, the devout execration of dissenters, will remind the reader of ecclesiastical history of the excesses of pagan ferocity, when the people, instigated by their priests, were wont to exclaim, *Christianos ad leones.* There is the less hope of this animosity being allayed, from its having arisen from *permanent causes.* That Christianity is a simple institution, unallied to worldly power; that a church is a voluntary society, invested with a right to choose its own officers, and acknowledging no head but Jesus Christ; that ministers are brethren whose emolument should be confined to the voluntary contributions of the people, are maxims drawn from so high an authority, that it may well be apprehended that the church is doomed to vanish before them. Under these circumstances, whatever portion of talents or of worth dissenters may possess, serves only to render them more hated, because more formidable. Had they merely revelled with the wanton, and drunk with the drunken; had they been clothed with curses, they might have been honoured and esteemed notwithstanding, as true sons of the church; but their dissent is a crime too indelible in the eyes of their enemies for any virtue to alleviate, or any merit to efface.

Till the test business was agitated, however, we were not aware of our labouring under such a weight of prejudice. Confiding in the mildness of the times, and conscious that every trace of resentment was vanished from our own breasts, we fondly imagined that those of churchmen were equally replete with sentiments of generosity and candour. We accordingly ventured on a renewal of our claim as men, and as citizens; but had not proceeded far before we were assailed with the bitterest reproaches. The innocent design of relieving ourselves from a disgraceful proscription was construed by our enemies into an attack on the church and state. Their opposition was both more violent and more formidable than was expected. They let us see, that however languidly the flame of their devotion may burn, that of resentment and party spirit, like vestal fire, must never be extinguished in their temples. Calumnies continued to be propagated, till they produced the riots at Birmingham, that ever-memorable æra in the annals of bigotry and fanaticism, when Europe beheld, with astonishment and regret, the outrage sustained by philo-

sophy in the most enlightened of countries and in the first of her sons! When we hear such excesses as these justified and applauded, we seem to be falling back apace into the darkness of the middle ages.

The connexion between civil and religious liberty is too intimate to make it surprising, that they who are attached to the one should be friendly to the other. The dissenters have accordingly seldom failed to lend their support to men who seemed likely to restore the vigour of a sinking constitution. Parliamentary reform has been cherished by them with an ardour equal to its importance. This part of their character inflames opposition still farther; and affords a pretext to their enemies for overwhelming the cause of liberty under an obnoxious name. The reproach on this head, however, is felt as an honour, when it appears by their conduct that they despair of attacking liberty with success, while the reputation of dissenters remains undiminished. The enmity of the vicious is the test of virtue.

Dissenters are reproached with the appellation of republicans; but the truth of the charge has neither appeared from facts, nor been supported by any reasonable evidence. Among them, as among other classes (and in no greater proportion), there are persons to be found, no doubt, who, without any hostility to the present government, prefer in theory a republican to a monarchical form; a point on which the most enlightened men in all ages have entertained very different opinions. In a government like ours, consisting of three simple elements, as this variety of sentiment may naturally be expected to take place, so if any predilection be felt toward one more than another, that partiality seems most commendable which inclines to the republican part. At most it is only the love of liberty to excess. The mixture of monarchy and nobility is chiefly of use, as it gives regularity, order, and stability to popular freedom. Were we, however, without any proof, to admit that dissenters are more tinctured with republican principles than others, it might be considered as the natural effect of the absurd conduct of the legislature. Exposed to pains and penalties, excluded from all offices of trust, proscribed by the spirit of the present reign, menaced and insulted wherever they appear, they must be more than men if they felt no resentment, or were passionately devoted

to the ruling powers. To expect affection in return for injury, is to gather where they have not scattered, and reap where they have not sown. The superstition of dissenters is not so abject as to prompt them to worship the constitution through fear. Yet, as they have not forgotten the benefits it imparted, and the protection it afforded till of late, they are too much its friends to flatter its defects or defend its abuses. Their only wish is to see it reformed and reduced to its original principles.

In recent displays of loyalty they must acknowledge themselves extremely defective. They have never plundered their neighbours to show their attachment to the king; nor has their zeal for religion ever broke out into oaths and execrations. They have not proclaimed their respect for regular government by a breach of the laws; or attempted to maintain tranquillity by riots. These beautiful specimens of loyalty belong to the virtue and moderation of the high church party alone, with whose character they perfectly correspond.

In a scurrilous paper which has been lately circulated with malignant industry, the dissenters at large, and Dr. Price in particular, are accused, with strange effrontery, of having involved us in the American war; when it is well known they ever stood aloof from that scene of guilt and blood.

Had their remonstrances been regarded, the calamities of that war had never been incurred; but, what is of more consequence in the estimation of anonymous scribblers, there would have remained one lie less to swell the catalogue of their falsehoods.

From the joy which dissenters have expressed at the French revolution, it has been most absurdly inferred that they wish for a similar event in England, without considering that such a conclusion is a libel on the British constitution, as it must proceed on a supposition that our government is as despotic as the ancient monarchy of France. To imagine the feelings must be the same when the objects are so different, shows a most lamentable degree of malignity and folly.

Encompassed as dissenters are by calumny and reproach, they have still the satisfaction to reflect, that these have usually been the lot of distinguished virtue; and that, in the

corrupt state of men's interests and passions, the unpopularity of a cause is rather a presumption of its excellence.

They will be still more happy if the frowns of the world should be the means of reviving that spirit of evangelical piety which once distinguished them so highly. Content if they can gain protection, without being so romantic as to aspire to praise, they will continue firm, I doubt not, in those principles which they have hitherto acted on, unseduced by rewards, and unshaken by dangers. From the passions of their enemies they will appeal to the judgment of posterity; —a more impartial tribunal. Above all, they will calmly await the decision of the Great Judge, before whom both they and their enemies must appear, and the springs and sources of their mutual animosity be laid open; when the clouds of misrepresentation being scattered, it will be seen they are a virtuous and oppressed people, who are treading, though with unequal steps, in the path of those illustrious prophets, apostles, and martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy. In the mean time they are far from envying the popularity and applause which may be acquired in a contrary course; esteeming the reproaches of freedom above the splendours of servitude.

Section VI.

On the Causes of the present Discontents.

We have arrived, it is a melancholy truth which can no longer be concealed, we have at length arrived at that crisis when nothing but speedy and effectual reform can save us from ruin. An amendment in the representation is wanted, as well to secure the liberty we already possess, as to open the way for the removal of those abuses which pervade every branch of the administration. The accumulation of debt and taxes, to a degree unexampled in any other age or country, has so augmented the influence of the crown, as to destroy the equipoise and balance of the constitution. The original design of the funding system, which commenced in the reign of King William, was to give stability to the revolution, by engaging the monied interest to embark on its bottom. It immediately advanced the influence of the crown, which the

whigs then exalted as much as possible, as a countervail to the interest of the Pretender.

The mischief of this short-sighted policy cannot be better described than in the language of Bolingbroke. "Few "men," says he, "at that time looked forward enough to "foresee the consequences of the new constitution of the "revenue that was soon afterward formed, nor of the method "of the funding system that immediately took place; which, "absurd as they are, have continued since, till it has become "scarce possible to alter them. Few people, I say, foresaw "how the multiplication of taxes, and the creation of funds, "would increase yearly the power of the crown, and bring "our liberties by a natural and necessary progression into a "more real, though less apparent danger, than they were in "before the revolution; a due reflection on the experience of "other ages and countries would have pointed out national "corruption as the natural and necessary consequence of "investing the crown with the management of so vast a "revenue; and also, the loss of liberty as the natural and "necessary consequence of national corruption."*

If there be any truth in these reflections, how much must our apprehensions be heightened by the prodigious augmentation of revenue and debt since the time of George the First! What a harvest has been reaped from the seeds of corruption then sown! The revenue is now upwards of seventeen millions; and though nine are employed to pay the interest of the national debt, this is small consolation, when we reflect that that debt is the remnant of wasteful, destructive wars, and that, till there is a change in the system, we are continually liable to similar calamities. The multiplied channels through which seventeen millions of money must flow into the treasury, the legion of officers it creates, the patronage its expenditure on the several branches of the administration supplies, have rendered the influence of the crown nearly absolute and decisive. The control of parliament sinks under this pressure into formality: the balance of the different orders becomes a mere theory, which serves to impose upon ignorance and varnish corruption. There is no power in the state that can act as a sufficient antagonist to the silent irresistible force of royal patronage.

* Letter II. on the Study of History.

The influence of the crown, by means of its revenue, is more dangerous than prerogative, in proportion as corruption operates after a more concealed manner than force. A violent act of prerogative is sensibly felt, and creates an alarm; but it is the nature of corruption to lay apprehension asleep, and to effect its purposes while the forms of liberty remain undisturbed. The first employs force to enslave the people; the second employs the people to enslave themselves. The most determined enemy to freedom can wish for nothing more than the continuance of present abuses. While the semblance of representation can be maintained, while popular delusion can be kept up, he will spare the *extremities* of liberty. He aims at a higher object, that of *striking at the heart.*

A fatal lethargy has long been spreading amongst us, attended, as is natural, with a prevailing disposition both in and out of parliament, to treat plans of reform with contempt. After the accession, place and pension bills were frequently passed by the commons, though rejected by the lords; nothing of that nature is now ever attempted. A standing army in time of peace was a subject of frequent complaint, and is expressly provided against by the Bill of Rights; it is now become a part of the constitution; for though the nominal direction be placed in parliament, the mutiny bill passes as a matter of course, the forces are never disbanded; the more completely to detach them from the community, barracks are erected; and martial law is established in its utmost severity. If freedom can survive this expedient, copied from the practice of foreign despots, it will be an instance of unexampled good fortune. Mr. Hume terms it a mortal distemper in the British constitution, of which it must *inevitably* perish.

To whatever cause it be owing, it is certain the measures of administration have, during the present reign, leaned strongly towards arbitrary power. The decision on the Middlesex election was a blow aimed at the vitals of the constitution. Before the people had time to recover from their panic, they were plunged into the American war—a war of pride and ambition, and ending in humiliation and disgrace. The spirit of the government is so well understood, that the most violent even of the clergy are content to drop their animosity, to turn their affections into a new channel, and to devote to the house of Hanover the flattery and the zeal by which they ruined the

race of Stuart. There cannot be a clearer symptom of the decay of liberty than the dread of speculative opinions; which is, at present, carried to a length in this nation that can scarcely be exceeded. Englishmen were accustomed till of late, to make political speculation the amusement of leisure, and the employment of genius; they are now taught to fear it more than death. Under the torpid touch of despotism the patriotic spirit has shrunk into a narrow compass; confined to gaze with admiration on the proceedings of parliament, and listen to the oracles of the minister with silent acquiescence, and pious awe. Abuses are sacred, and the pool of corruption must putrefy in peace. Persons who a few years back were clamorous for reform, are making atonement for having been betrayed into any appearance of virtue, by a quick return to their natural character. Is not the kingdom peopled with spies and informers? Are not inquisitorial tribunals erected in every corner of the land? A stranger who, beholding a whole nation filled with alarm, should inquire the cause of the commotion, would be a little surprised on being informed, that instead of any appearance of insurrection, or plots, a pamphlet had only been published. In a government upheld by so immense a revenue, and boasting a constitution declared to be the envy of the world, this abject distrust of its own power is more than a million lectures on corruptions and abuses. The wisdom of ages, the master-piece of human policy, complete in all its parts, and that needs no reformation, can hardly support itself against a sixpenny pamphlet, devoid, it is said, of truth or ability! To require sycophants to blush, is exacting too great a departure from the decorum of their character: but common sense might be expected to remain, after shame is extinguished.

Whoever seriously contemplates the present infatuation of the people, and the character of the leaders, will be tempted to predict the speedy downfall of liberty. They cherish the forms, while they repress the spirit of the constitution; they persecute freedom, and adorn its sepulchre. When corruption has struck its roots so deep, it may be doubted whether even the liberty of the press be not of more detriment than advantage. The prints, which are the common sources of information, are replete with falsehood; virtue is calumniated; and scarcely are any characters safe from their blast, except the

advocates of corruption. The greater part, no doubt, are in the pay of the ministry, or their adherents. Thus delusion spreads, and the people are instructed to confound anarchy with reform, their friends with their oppressors.

Who can hear, without indignant contempt, the minister's annual eulogium on the English constitution? Is the parliament so ignorant, then, that it needs to go to school every session to learn those elements of political knowledge which every Briton understands? Or is the nature of the British constitution a secret in the breast of the ministry, to be opened with the budget? Indisputable excellence wants no encomium; but this flattery is intended to bury, in an admiration of its merit, all remembrance of its defects. Whatever remains of beauty or vigour it possesses are held in no estimation but as they produce an acquiescence in abuses. It is its imperfections only ministers admire; its corruptions that solace them. The topics of their encomium are as absurd as the purpose is infamous. The flourishing state of trade and manufactures is displayed in proof of the unequalled excellence of the British constitution, without reflecting that a temporary decay will support with equal force an opposite conclusion. For if we owe our present prosperity to the nature of the government, our recent calamities must be traced to the same source, and that constitution which is now affirmed to be the best, must be allowed during the American war to have been the worst. That there is a connexion between commercial prosperity and the nature of a government, must be admitted; but its operation is gradual and slow, not felt from year to year, but to be traced by the comparison of one age and country with another. But allowing that our wealth may increase along with the increase of abuses, the nation, we hope, is not so sordid as to look upon wealth as the supreme good; however well that idea may correspond with the views of a ministry who seem determined to leave us no other. Freedom as it animates industry, by securing its rewards, opens a path to wealth; but if that wealth be suffered to debase a people, and render them venal and dependent, it will silently conduct them back again to misery and depression. Rome was never more opulent than on the eve of departing liberty. Her vast wealth was a sediment that remained on the reflux of the tide. It is quite unnecessary to remind the

reader how all this at present is reversed, and that the unbounded prodigality of Mr. Pitt and his successors in the conduct of the war, which the corruption of parliament enabled them to maintain, has plunged the nation into the deepest abyss of poverty and distress.

It is singular enough, but I hope not ominous, that the flattery bestowed by the poets of antiquity on the ruling powers resembles, in everything but its elegance, the adulation of modern sycophants. The extent of empire, the improvement of arts, the diffusion of opulence and splendour, are the topics with which Horace adorned the praises of Augustus: but the penetration of Tacitus developes, amidst these flattering appearances, the seeds of ruin. The florid bloom but ill concealed that fatal malady which preyed upon the vitals.

Between the period of national honour and complete degeneracy, there is usually an interval of national vanity, during which examples of virtue are recounted and admired without being imitated. The Romans were never more proud of their ancestors than when they ceased to resemble them. From being the freest and most high-spirited people in the world, they suddenly fell into the tamest and most abject submission. Let not the name of Britons, my countrymen, too much elate you; nor ever think yourselves safe while you abate one jot of that holy jealousy by which your liberties have been hitherto secured. The richer the inheritance bequeathed you, the more it merits your care for its preservation. The possession must be continued by that spirit with which it was at first acquired; and, as it was gained by vigilance, it will be lost by supineness. A degenerate race repose on the merit of their forefathers: the virtuous create a fund of their own. The former look back upon their ancestors, to hide their shame: the latter look forward to posterity, to levy a tribute of admiration. In vain will you confide in the forms of a free constitution. Unless you reanimate those forms with fresh vigour, they will be melancholy memorials of what you once were, and haunt you with the shade of departed liberty. A silent stream of corruption poured over the whole land, has tainted every branch of the administration with decay. On your temperate but manly exertions depend the happiness and freedom of the latest posterity. That Assembly which

sits by right of representation will be little inclined to oppose your will, expressed in a firm, decisive manner. You may be deafened by clamour, misled by sophistry, or weakened by division, but you cannot be despised with impunity. A vindictive ministry may hang the terrors of criminal prosecution over the heads of a few with success; but at their peril will they attempt to intimidate a nation. The trick of associations, of pretended plots, and silent insurrections, will oppose a feeble barrier to the impression of the popular mind.

The theory of the constitution in the most important particulars is a satire on the practice. The theory provides the responsibility of ministers as a check to the execution of ill designs; but in reality we behold the basest of the tribe retreat from the ruin of their country, loaded with honours and with spoils. Theory tells us the parliament is free and independent; experience will correct the mistake by showing its subservience to the crown. We learn, from the first, that the legislature is chosen by the unbiassed voice of all who can be supposed to have a will of their own; we learn, from the last, the pretended electors are but a handful of the people, who are never less at their own disposal than in the business of election. Theory holds out equal benefits to all, and equal liberty, without any other discrimination than that of a good and bad subject: its practice brands with proscription and disgrace a numerous class of inhabitants on account of their religion. In theory, the several orders of the state are a check on each other; but corruption has oiled the wheels of that machinery, harmonised its motions, and enabled it to bear, with united pressure, on the happiness of the people.

The principal remedy for the diseases of the state is undoubtedly a reform in parliament; from which, as a central point, inferior improvements may issue; but as I have already treated on that subject at large, I shall not insist on it here. I cannot close this pamphlet, however, without adverting for a moment to a few of the principal objects which well merit the attention of the legislature.

On the abuses in the church, it is to little purpose to expatiate, as they are too numerous to be detailed, and too inveterate to be corrected. Unless it be a maxim that honesty will endanger her existence, her creeds ought in all reason to

correspond with the sentiments of her members. The world, it is to be feared, will be little edified by the example of a church, which, in compelling its ministers to subscribe to opinions that few of them believe, is a discipline of fraud. Nor is the collection of tithes calculated to soften the odium. As a mode of union with the parishioners, they are fruitful of contention; as a restraint on the improvement of land, impolitic and oppressive; as a remnant of the Jewish law, superstitious and absurd. True magnanimity would instruct the clergy to recede from a claim which they will probably be compelled shortly to relinquish. But no reform, it seems, must take place in the church any more than in the state, that its corruptions may keep pace with the progress of its ally.

The condition of the poor in this country calls for compassion and redress. Many of them, through the want of mental improvement, are sunk almost beneath the level of humanity;* and their hard-earned pittance is so diminished by taxes, that it is with the utmost difficulty they can nourish their children, and utterly impossible to afford them education. The poor laws enacted for their relief, by confining their industry to a particular spot, and denying them the privilege of residing where they may exert it to the greatest advantage, are an accumulated oppression. Were industry allowed to find its level, were the poor laws abolished, and a small portion of that expense which swells the tide of corruption, the splendours of the great, and the miseries of war, bestowed on the instruction of the common people, the happy effects would descend to the remotest posterity, and open a prospect which humanity might delight to anticipate. In England, we have been adding wheel to wheel, and spring to spring, till we have rendered the machine of government far too complicated; forgetting, in the midst of wars, negotiations, and factious disputes, that the true end of civil polity is the happiness of

* The change in this respect, since the first publication of the 'Apology,' is of the most gratifying kind. All ranks of society, and all persuasions of Christians, have vied with each other in their efforts to give religious and other useful instruction to the children of the poor. Still, there remains much to be done, and we are, with respect to the general education of the lower classes, *very* far behind the Americans, especially those in the state of New York. – Ed.

the people. We have listened to every breeze that moves along the surface of Europe, and descried danger from afar; while, deaf to the complaints of the poor, we have beheld ignorance, wretchedness, and barbarity multiply at home, without the smallest regard. Is it possible to behold with patience the numberless tribe of placemen, pensioners, and sycophants who are enriched at the public expense? a noxious spawn engendered by the corruptions of government, and nourished by its diseases. Were our immense revenue conducive to the maintenance of royal dignity, or proportioned to the exigencies of the state, it would be borne with pleasure; but at present it bids fair to be the purchase of our servitude.

Our laws, in order to become a proper rule of civil life, much want revision and amendment. They are, moreover, never promulgated. For this omission, Judge Blackstone assigns a very curious reason: "That being enacted by our representatives, every man is supposed, in the eye of the law, to be present in the legislature." It would be an improvement on this delegated knowledge of the law, if the penalty were also delegated, and criminals punished by representation. The laws, in their present state, are so piled into volumes, encumbered with precedents, and perplexed with intricacies, that they are often rather a snare than a guide, and are a fruitful source of the injustice they are intended to prevent. The expense is as formidable as the penalty; nor is it to any purpose to say they are the same to the poor as to the rich, while by their delay, expense, and perplexity, they are placed on an eminence which opulence only can ascend. The commendation bestowed so liberally by foreigners on English jurisprudence was never meant to be extended to our municipal code, which is confused, perplexed, and sanguinary in the extreme; but to the trial by jury, and the dignified impartiality which marks the conduct of the judges. For want of gradual improvements, to enable it to keep pace with the progress of society, the most useful operations of law are clouded by fictions.*

These are a few only of the maladies which indicate a bad habit of the political body; nor can a true estimate be made

* See an excellent publication on this subject, entitled 'Juridical Essays,' by Mr. Randall.

of our situation so much by adverting to *particular evils*, as by an attention to the general aspect of affairs. The present crisis is, in my apprehension, the fullest of terror and of danger we have ever experienced. In the extension of excise laws, in the erection of barracks, in the determined adherence to abuses displayed by parliament, in the desertion of pretended patriots, the spread of arbitrary principles, the tame, subdued spirit of the nation, we behold the seeds of political ruin quickening into life. The *securities* of liberty, as was long since remarked by Dr. Price, have given way; and what remains is little more than an *indulgence*, which cannot continue long, when it ceases to be cherished in the affections of the people. The little of public virtue that still subsists is no match for disciplined armies of corruption. The people are perishing for lack of knowledge. Disquieted by imaginary alarms, insensible to the real danger that awaits them, they are taught to court that servitude which will be a source of misery to themselves and to posterity.

Deplorable as the prospect is, a precarious hope may be founded, perhaps, on the magnitude of abuses. There is, it has often been remarked, an ultimate point, both of elevation and depression, in the affairs of kingdoms, to which, when they arrive, they begin to turn of their own accord, and to fall back into their ancient channels. We are certainly entitled to all the comfort that consideration is capable of affording. Taxation can hardly be more oppressive, representation more venal and inadequate, the influence of the people more extinguished, or falsehood and deception more triumphant, than they are at present.

There is also another circumstance attending the present crisis, which, if we are wise enough to improve it, may be of the utmost advantage. Of the numberless political parties which have hitherto distracted our attention, and divided our attachment, there now remain but two; the patrons of corruption, and the friends of liberty; they who are waiting for the disorders of government to ripen into arbitrary power, and they who are anxious to bring back the constitution to its original principles. The colours by which they are distinguished are too bold and strong to be ever confounded; or if there could be any possible embarrassment in the choice, the ministry have condescended to remove that obscurity, by our

suing an interest not only distinct from, but directly opposed to, that of the people. The clamour of whigs and tories hath happily subsided; and pretended patriots are at length so kind as to unmask before the people, and stand forth in their native character, the objects of just detestation. We cannot wish for better lessons of public virtue than is furnished by the contrast of their vices.

On the present war, until the views of the ministry are more unfolded, it behoves me to speak with tenderness and reserve. If nothing more be intended than the maintenance of national honour, and the faith of treaties, it will merit the warmest support of every well-wisher to his country. But if the re-establishment of the ancient government of France be any part of the object; if it be a war with freedom, a confederacy of kings against the rights of man; it will be the last humiliation and disgrace that can be inflicted on Great Britain; and, were there any truth in tales of incantation, to behold us engaged in such a cause were enough to disturb the repose of our ancestors, and move the ashes of the dead! The steps preparatory to the war, the inflamed passions, and the character of our allies, afford an ill omen of the temper with which it will be conducted. The pretence respecting the Netherlands certainly entitles the ministry to the praise of consistence. It is quite of a piece with the candour and sincerity which affirmed the balance of Europe to be destroyed by the seizure of Oczakow, but denied it was endangered by the conquest of Poland, and the invasion of France.

The French revolution, we cannot but remember, was from the first an object of jealousy to ministers. There needed not the late unhappy excesses, the massacres of September, and the execution of Louis, to excite or display their hostility. It appeared in the insult and derision of their retainers, from the highest to the lowest. If they meant fairly to the interests of general liberty, why that uneasiness at the fall of despotism in a neighbouring country? Why render parliament a theatre of abuse on a revolution whose commencement was distinguished by unexampled mildness and tranquillity? But this part of their conduct was likewise consistent. Intent on the destruction of liberty in one country, they were disconcerted at seeing it revive in another; and before they ventured to extinguish the dying taper, waited for the surrounding

scene to be shut up in darkness. I am perfectly aware, that to speak in terms of decency and respect of the French revolution, is to incur, in the prevailing disposition of the times, the last of infamies. If we dare to rejoice at the emancipation of a great people from thraldom, it must be at the peril of the foulest imputations that imagination can invent, or malignity apply. In contempt, however, of these calumnies, I am free to confess, the French revolution has always appeared to me, and does still appear, the most splendid event recorded in the annals of history. The friends of liberty contemplate the crimes and disorders with which it has been stained* with the deepest regret; but they still hope that they will in the result be more than compensated, by the grandeur of its principles, and the beneficence of its effects. Instead of wishing for a similar event in England, they are intent on reform chiefly to avoid that necessity. Under every *form* of government they know how to recognise the divine aspect of freedom, and without it can be satisfied with none. The evils of anarchy and of despotism are two extremes which they equally dread; and between which no middle path can be found but that of effectual reform. To avert the calamities that await us on either side, the streams of corruption must be drained off, the independence of parliament restored, the ambition of aristocracy repressed, and the majesty of the people lift itself up. It is possible to retreat from the brink of a precipice, but woe to that nation which sleeps upon it!

* The execution of the king was certainly a most cruel and unjustifiable transaction, alike repugnant to law, order, and humanity. Without being conducive to any views of policy whatever, it seems to have been merely a gratification of the most detestable passions. The treatment of the beautiful and unfortunate queen, and of the royal family, is barbarous and unmanly in the extreme. When we look at their sufferings, humanity weeps, and pity forgets their crimes.

REVIEW

OF THE

APOLOGY FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS *

PUBLISHED IN

THE CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN;

AND

MR. HALL'S REPLY.

[PUBLISHED IN 1822.]

"THE political principles of the Bible are simple, distinct, and plain. The sacred writers enter into no niceties, draw no lines of exact demarcation, meet no involved cases of civil casuistry; but, speaking of mankind generally as alike depraved and unruly, and of governments as the creations of God's providence, they inculcate, without qualification, reservation, or restriction, the obvious and indispensable duties of submission, honour, and obedience.

"It has been, however, very much the fashion of late, to get rid of these unpleasant and '*degrading*' injunctions, by pleading the change of time and circumstances, and the difference between the laws and system of government under which we are privileged to live, and those of the apostolic days. Now, as to the general duty of obedience, it is obvious that it must apply rather *more* than *less* strongly to those who live under a paternal government, than to those who live under a tyrannical one. At the same time we are ready to allow, that the system of freedom which, in this country, gives to the people a share in the legislature, and an influence over the government, renders the submission due from them less *implicit* and *uninquiring*, at the same time that it increases the obligation to its cheerful payment.

"But, although it be conceded that, under a constitution which renders the people a party to their own government, it is lawful and proper for laymen to interest themselves in-

* In order that the propriety of Mr. Hall's reply may be fairly estimated, it has been thought right to reprint the original article that called it forth.—ED.

timately in political concerns, and even to a certain extent to participate in political contests,—there is one body of men whom we could ever wish to see taking no other part in these matters than as moderators, instructors, and peace-makers.

"The ministers of the Gospel must, in the discharge of their duty,—they must, if they will '*declare the whole counsel* of God,' sometimes touch upon those passages of Scripture which inculcate the *duties of subjects*. While St. Paul, in the days of Nero himself, was led by the Holy Spirit to write, 'Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;' and to pronounce, without hesitation, 'He that resisteth the power,' tyrannical as it was in the extreme, 'resisteth the ordinance of God;' and while similar passages abound in the inspired volume, it cannot be thought consistent with the character of a preacher of the Gospel to maintain an absolute *silence* on these topics. But there is one rule which, in our opinion, ministers would do well to follow, and that is, to go no further than the Bible will carry them. The war of parties and factions, the continual struggle of political leaders, the various questions of constitutional casuistry, are subjects which lie beyond this boundary, and with which they would do well not to embroil themselves. The servant of the Lord is exhorted 'not to strive,' but 'to cut off occasion from them which desire occasion:' and assuredly he will find that the bare discharge of his plain duty in these things will expose him to sufficient obloquy and reproach.

"Entertaining this view of the subject, it is with sorrow that we observe the republication, under his own immediate sanction, of Mr. Hall's 'Apology for the Freedom of the Press.' This work was first given to the world about thirty years ago, and has been long since forgotten, or remembered only as one of the sins of its author's youth. Since its disappearance, Mr. H. has so much better employed his time and his great talents, that he may now be considered as standing in the very first rank among the Nonconformists of the present day. And is it not a lamentable thing to see such a man stepping forward, in the ripeness of his years, and at the height of his well-earned reputation, to obtrude himself on the public in the degraded character of a violent party-scribe? And yet, in what other light can we consider the man who, in so uncalled-for and gratuitous a manner, and at so con-

paratively peaceful a period, sends into the world, with the sanction of his name and of his latest corrections, a new edition of such a pamphlet as this?

"He indeed states, as an excuse for the republication, that the term of copyright being expired, it was no longer in his power to prevent the reprinting of his work. The law, however, is not so; the power of perpetuating its oblivion lay still in his hands. But, had he even been correct on this point, where was the necessity for his being an active agent in this reappearance?

"To characterize the tract before us appropriately, we need only observe, that the principal topics discussed by this '*minister of the Gospel*' are, the right of public discussion, the propriety of political associations, *parliamentary reform*, the rights of men, the character of dissenters, the present discontents. The work is extremely personal, and great bitterness is shown towards the late Bishop Horsley, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Pitt. We shall not imitate Mr Hall's example, by entering into a discussion on the subject of Mr. Pitt's political character: but we should have hoped that the reflection of his undoubted integrity, and of that perfect devotion to his country, which led him to sacrifice even life itself in its service, might have spared him, at the distance of sixteen years from his death, a new volley of bitter reproach from one whose vocation is '*the Gospel of peace.*'

"As to the character of Bishop Horsley, it is now placed far beyond the reach of his adversaries; and the Christian world will know how to appreciate invectives against such a man, from one who is at the same time the eulogist of Priestley and Price, the Socinians, and of Mary Wolstonecroft, the female libertine and deist.

"Looking then upon this work as one of which a critical analysis would be ill placed in the pages of the 'Christian Guardian,' we shall conclude with a specimen or two of the political creed of Mr. Hall, and of the manner in which he supports it.

"He is then, as far as professed doctrine can make him, plainly and clearly a radical reformer. He pleads for 'annual parliaments,' for universal suffrage, for the unfettered publication of every kind of blasphemy, for the *exclusion* of the relatives of noblemen from the House of Commons, for

the overthrow of all ecclesiastical establishments, and for 'the sovereignty of the people.' In what part of the sacred volume he has discovered the least sanction for any one of these notions, we are at a loss to imagine.

"In fact, the whole pamphlet is an argument in favour of the supremacy and infallibility of the people, and of the necessity of paying the most implicit obedience to the least expression of their will. Now, could these notions have been carried into practice at the time they were written (soon after the Birmingham riots), and could a legislature have been formed upon Mr. H.'s universal suffrage plan, the necessary and inevitable consequence would have been, that, as the feeling of the multitude ran violently against all the friends of the French revolution, Mr. H. and most of his fellow-labourers and admirers would have been silenced, banished, or hanged. So much for the *effects* which might be expected to follow Mr. Hall's plan. And as for the *principles* upon which that plan is founded, we find him broadly stating, in the latter end of this work, with admirable consistency, that 'calumny and reproach are usually the lot of distinguished virtue,' and that '*the unpopularity of a cause is rather a presumption of its excellence.*' Now, if the fact be so, it cannot be for the good of the people that this perpetually erroneous criterion should govern the affairs of the state.

"Mr. Hall concludes his prefixed advertisement with the hope 'that the reader will recollect, as an excuse for the warmth of his expressions, that the work is an *eulogium on a dead friend;*' which is asserting, in other words, that the press is enslaved, and its liberty departed. And, having written this some years since, he now coolly republishes it, after witnessing the acquittals of Hone and Wooller, and while the wretched Carlile is braving every effort that can be made to stop the torrent of blasphemy which has so long issued from his warehouse.

"Again, Mr. H. assured us, thirty years since, that we had then '*at length arrived* at that crisis when nothing but speedy and effectual reform could save us from ruin.' Now, since the first publication of this prediction, we have maintained a contest of long duration with the greatest conqueror of modern times, and have fairly subdued him. We have immensely augmented the extent of our empire, and increased its ratio of

population. We have tripled our commerce and our revenue. We have improved, it is to be hoped, the state of our internal population, by the establishment of schools and the increase of places of worship; and we have made some progress, in the commencement at least, of the great work of evangelizing the whole world.

"And after all this, Mr. Hall comes forward, with much admirable simplicity, to tell us of this wonderful prophecy of his, delivered only the third part of a century since, that without *immediate reform in parliament*, *ruin* was then *inevitable*. Now, it is certain, that this same *immediate reform* has not yet taken place, although one whole generation has passed away since the promulgation of this prediction. Has the dreadful alternative, then, fallen upon us? Have we been crushed by this *inevitable ruin?*

"The present comparatively prosperous and improving circumstances of the kingdom answer, No! to this question. The general state of the country, the average condition of the great mass of the people, is *better*, and not *worse*, than at the time when Mr. Hall first published this direful presage.

"If there be any exception to this state of general improvement, it is to be found in the depression of the agricultural interest of the country. But we are told, by those who ought to be judges, that the evils which threaten these classes have arisen from the want of sufficient legislative protection. And do we not know, from the conduct of the mobs of 1815, that a reformed parliament, a universal suffrage parliament, according to Mr. Hall's plan, would have withheld even the partial protection which has hitherto been granted, and would have thereby made, what is now distress and perplexity, absolute ruin and destruction? So much for the necessity and the effects of reform.

"It is with the most painful feelings that we are thus compelled to animadvert on this uncalled-for and altogether unnecessary republication. We repeat that the general principle on which we disapprove of it is, that a minister of the Gospel will always best consult the interests of his flock, and the dignity of his own character, by abstaining from any political discussion which transgresses the bounds prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Hall has overstepped these limits, and has plunged into the thickest of the war of party politics.

He has also chosen, we apprehend, the side which was generally found in most direct opposition to the Scripture injunctions of peace, quietness, and obedience. And as the weight of his character, and the authority of his name, render error from his pen trebly dangerous, we have felt only the more imperatively called upon to enter our protest against the principles which he has endeavoured to lay down, and to unmask the sophistry of the arguments by which he has attempted to support them."

MR. HALL'S REPLY.

To the Editor of the Leicester Journal.

SIR,

A VIOLENT attack on my character having appeared in your paper a few weeks since, contained in an extract from a periodical work, entitled the *Christian Guardian*, I rely on your impartiality for permitting me to repel the accusation through the same medium. If the misrepresentations which I have to complain of had been confined within the bounds of decency, I should have consulted my ease by remaining silent: but the writer, whoever he is, has availed himself of the impunity attached to anonymous communications so unsparingly, that I might be justly charged, not only with a criminal indifference to character, but with being accessory to the delusion of the public, were I to make no reply.

The amount of my offence consists in uttering a new edition of a political pamphlet, which made its appearance many years since, and passed through several editions. This writer says, I might have suppressed it; but the contrary is the fact. The term of copyright is well known to extend to fourteen years, after which any one is at liberty to republish a work without the consent of the Author. More than that time had elapsed since the last edition, and as it was at the

option of any bookseller to reprint it, so I was assured from various quarters, that, whether I consented or not, it would certainly be republished. The only alternative that remained was, either to suffer it to come forth in a form, perhaps, most incorrect, and mingled with foreign infusions, or to publish it under my own eye, and with such alterations and corrections as the author might deem proper. The latter was preferred, and for this a torrent of invective has issued from the *Christian Guardian.*

It certainly is very unusual for a writer to suppress his own publications, unless he has recanted the principles they contain. To persevere in doing so naturally exposes him to the suspicion either that he has renounced his former opinions, or that he is afraid to avow them; but neither of these situations is mine. I have changed no principle, and I feel no fear. Why, then, should I act in such a manner as must render me perpetually liable to either of these imputations? For a considerable time, indeed, after loud and repeated importunities, I declined a compliance with the wishes expressed for republication, from a sincere reluctance to engage in political controversy. By one party, in the meanwhile, it was my fortune to be so unequivocally claimed as a convert, and by the other so assailed with reproaches as an apostate, that I was convinced by experience there was no other way of putting an end to the misrepresentations of both but to republish the original pamphlet. Had I never written it, the same motives which made me reluctant to reprint, might probably have prevented my writing it; but since there is not a principle in it which I can conscientiously retract, and my silence has occasioned numerous misrepresentations and mistakes, the fair and manly part was doubtless to republish it. An ingenuous mind is not less ashamed of receiving praises it is conscious it has not deserved, than indignant at reproaches which are not merited.

But a minister of the Gospel, it seems, is on no occasion to meddle with party politics. How exactly this maxim was adhered to at the commencement of the late war, when military banners were consecrated, and the people everywhere summoned to arms

> By pulpit drum ecclesiastic,
> Beat with fist instead of a stick,

must be fresh in the recollection of my readers.

The men who, in the garb of clergymen, bustle at electioneering meetings, forsooth, are not really such, but merely assume the disguise of that holy order, since it would be uncandid to suppose they can so universally lose sight of what is befitting ministers of the Gospel. The venerable bench of bishops, who sit in the House of Lords, either attend in silent pomp, without taking any part in the deliberations, or they violate the character of ministers of the Gospel. We must have been grossly imposed upon by the public prints, which informed us of the clergy of a whole archdeaconry, or diocese, meeting to petition parliament against the Catholic claims, since they could never, with one consent, depart so far from the decorum of ministers of the Gospel!

The plain state of the case is, not that the writer is offended at my meddling with politics, but that I have meddled on the wrong side. Had the same mediocrity of talent been exerted in eulogizing the measures of ministers, his greetings would have been as loud as his invective is bitter. But it was exerted to expose public abuses, to urge the necessity of reform, and lay open the tergiversation of the heaven-born minister and Sunday duellist, who, after devoting the day of rest to deeds of blood, has, by a strange fatality, obtained a sort of political beatification. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*

Another head of accusation is, that I have censured the character of Bishop Horsley, whose character, the Reviewer tells us, "is far removed beyond my attack, while I have "eulogized Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley, Socinians." To this it is sufficient to reply, that Dr. Price was *not* a Socinian, but an Arian; he wrote professedly in confutation of Socinianism; and though I disapprove of his religious principles, I feel no hesitation in affirming, in spite of the frantic and unprincipled abuse of Burke, that a more ardent and enlightened friend of his country never lived than that venerable patriarch of freedom. Such were the sentiments of the worshipful corporation of London, who, in token of their esteem, presented him with the freedom of the city in a golden box; such was the judgment of Mr. Pitt, who long professed himself his admirer, and condescended to seek his advice on questions of finance. Dr. Priestley, it is acknowledged, was a Socinian; but it was not under that character that he was eulogized. It was as the friend of liberty, the victim of intolerance, and the author of

some of the most brilliant philosophical discoveries of modern times, for which he was celebrated throughout Europe, and his name enrolled as a member of the most illustrious institutions; so that my eulogy was but a mere feeble echo of the applause which resounded from every civilized portion of the globe. And are we suddenly fallen back into the darkness and ignorance of the middle ages, during which the spell of a stupid and unfeeling uniformity bound the nations in iron slumbers, that it has become a crime to praise a man for talents which the whole world admired, and for virtues which his enemies confessed, merely because his religious creed was erroneous? If anything could sink orthodoxy into contempt, it would be its association with such Gothic barbarity of sentiment, such reptile meanness. What renders the wretched bigotry of the Reviewer the more conspicuous, is, that the eulogy in question was written almost immediately after the Birmingham riots, that disgraceful ebullition of popular phrenzy, during which a ferocious mob tracked his steps like bloodhounds, demolished his house, destroyed his library and apparatus, and, advancing from thence to the destruction of private and public buildings, filled the whole town and vicinity with terror and dismay.

What sort of a *Christian Guardian* the Reviewer would have proved on that occasion may be easily inferred from his passing over these atrocities in silence, while he discharges his malice on their unoffending victim.

The maxim, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, admits of exceptions; and as I am vilified for censuring Bishop Horsley, whose character, it is affirmed, "is far removed beyond my "attack," while I praised Priestley, the Socinian, justice compels me to remark (what the Reviewer probably knows well enough), that in the virtues of private life Dr. Priestley was as much superior to his antagonist as he was inferior in the correctness of his speculative theology.

From the principles avowed in the *Apology*, this writer asserts, that it is evident I am to be classed to all intents and purposes with *radical reformers*. This charge is grounded on my recommendation of annual parliaments and universal suffrage. Now he either knows that Mr. Pitt, in conjunction with the Duke of Richmond, presided at public meetings, in which annual parliaments and the extension of the right of

suffrage to all householders were recommended, or he does not. If he pleads ignorance of the fact, what presumption is it for a man so uninformed to write upon the subject! If he knows it, let me ask, was Mr. Pitt a *radical reformer* at the time he recommended those measures? If he was, I plead guilty to the charge; but if he was *not*, the recommendation of a similar plan is no evidence of my being a *radical*. For my own part, I feel the utmost contempt of the charge of radicalism. A radical reformer, if we attend to the import of words, is one that goes to the *root* of the evil, that proposes not merely to palliate, but to extirpate it. And what is that reform worth that proposes less? He who labours under an inveterate malady, wishes for a *radical* cure: he would put little value on a remedy that should mitigate the pain, without reaching the source of the disorder. If the appellation of *radical reformer* is intended to denote a revolutionist, it is most absurdly applied to the advocate of annual parliaments and universal suffrage, because the first of these measures is merely a revival of the ancient practice, and the latter most consonant to the genius of a free constitution, which presupposes the extension of the elective franchise to all who can be presumed to have a will of their own: the exercise of this right, coupled with the practice of voting by ballot, would, in my humble opinion, be the best expedient for securing the freedom and tranquillity of elections. Be this as it may, a sincere proposal of *reform* must differ essentially from the proposal of a revolution. If, by styling me a *radical* reformer, this writer intends to impute revolutionary views, I say it is a calumny and a falsehood; and I challenge him to produce a single sentence from my publications which sustains such a charge, or which convicts me of hostility to the existing order of things, as consisting of King, Lords, and Commons. But if he means, that I am for such a reform as will cut up corruption by the roots, I feel no inclination to disavow it. He wishes, it is evident, to fix the impression that I am hostile to the regal branch of the constitution; but shrinks from making the assertion, and endeavours to convey the venom of his accusations through the subtle vehicle of a dark and ambiguous phraseology.

For what purpose, but that of exciting hatred and horror, he has thought fit to couple my name with the mention of

Hone and Carlile, it is not easy to conjecture. The blasphemy of their publications is quite as disgusting to me as to himself; but I am at a loss to conceive the justness of that reasoning which would infer that no political corruption, however enormous, no maladministration, however flagrant, must be exposed to animadversion, until these men have ceased to exhale their impieties. Let this principle once be admitted, and we shall never want Hones and Carliles in abundance: to remove a shield so easily purchased, and so effectual in the protection of every abuse, might be deemed an infatuation.

"He (the author of the Apology) pleads," says the Reviewer, "for annual parliaments, for universal suffrage, for "the unfettered publication of every kind of blasphemy, for "the exclusion of the relatives of noblemen from the House of "Commons, for the overthrow of all ecclesiastical establish-"ments, and for the sovereignty of the people. In what part "of the sacred volume," he adds, "he has discovered the least "sanction for any one of these notions, we are at a loss to "imagine." The fatuity of this remark baffles all description. For why may I not retort his own language, and say,—This author pleads for septennial parliaments, for limited suffrage, for the admission of the relatives of noblemen to the House of Commons, and for the support of ecclesiastical establishments; but in what part of the sacred volume he finds the least sanction for them, I am at a loss to imagine? But when did I plead for the publication of blasphemy, fettered or unfettered? To plead for the liberty of divulging speculative opinions is one thing, and to assert the right of uttering blasphemy is another. For blasphemy, which is the speaking contumeliously of God, is not a speculative error; it is an overt act; a crime which no state should tolerate. In relation to the question of ecclesiastical establishments, since I am challenged to produce any passage from Scripture which sanctions my opposition to them, I beg leave to refer him to our Lord's declaration: *Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up.* That *national* churches, or exclusive establishments of religion by the civil magistrate, are one of these plants, will not be denied; since nothing of that kind, it is universally allowed, existed during the three first and purest ages of Christianity, and not being authorized by the *great* Head of the church, it must, if we

believe him, be rooted up. I have used the term *great* Head of the church, by way of distinction from that *little* head* which the church of England has invented, and on which, whether it be a beauty or a deformity in the body of Christ, the Scriptures are certainly as silent as on universal suffrage and annual parliaments.

It may not be improper in this place to notice a curious argument which the Reviewer adduces in support of his darling tenet of passive obedience and non-resistance, from the prevailing and inherent depravity of human nature. He reminds us that mankind are represented in Scripture as "alike depraved and unruly;" and, from these premises, attempts to enforce that interpretation of Scripture which would annihilate the liberties of mankind, and reduce them, without "restriction or reservation," to a passive submission to their political superiors. On another occasion I have sufficiently rescued the sentiments of the inspired writers from such a detestable imputation, by showing that their design is merely to inculcate the general duty of obedience to government, as the ordinance of God, while they leave the just bounds of authority, and the limits of obedience, to the regulation and adjustment of reason and experience; a task to which they are perfectly adequate. But how does the depravity of human nature evince the necessity of passive obedience and non-resistance, unless it is contended that the ruling part of mankind are *not* depraved? That mankind are naturally "depraved and unruly," affords a good argument for the existence of *Government itself;* but since they are "*alike* depraved and unruly," since governors partake of the same corruption as the people, aggravated too often by the possession of power, which inflames the passions and corrupts the heart, to allege the depravity of human nature as a reason for submission to arbitrary power, involves the absurdity of supposing that the cure of one degree of wickedness is to be obtained by affording an unlimited licence to a greater. Retrace the annals of all times and nations, and you will find in the triumph of despotism the triumph of

* A friend in conversation with Mr. Hall asked him whether, on cool meditation, he did not consider this allusion to the "little head" as a breach of taste? "Why (said he) I must confess it was better for a joke in the parlour, than to appear in print; but I never expected it would go beyond the columns of a newspaper."

wickedness; you will find that men have been virtuous, noble, and disinterested, just in proportion as they have been free.

The Reviewer affects to triumph over me, on account of the supposed failure of the prediction, that ruin would speedily ensue, unless prevented by Reform. "Has this dreadful al-"ternative," he asks, "fallen upon us? The present compa-"ratively prosperous and improving circumstances of the king-"dom answer, No. The general state of the country, the "average condition of the great mass of the people, is *better* "and not *worse* than at the time when Mr. Hall first published "this direful presage."

I am at a loss to reply in suitable terms to a writer who seems to glory in setting truth at defiance. Let me ask the reader, whether he thinks there is a single person to be found in the nation, who really believes our condition as a people is improved within the last thirty years? Where is this improvement to be found? Is it in the augmentation of the national debt to three times its former amount: in the accumulated weight of taxes; in the increase of the poor-rates; in the depression of land to less than one-half of its former value; in the ruin of the agricultural interest; in the thousands and tens of thousands of farmers who are distrained for rent, and they and their families reduced to beggary? Has this writer already forgotten the recent distress of the manufacturing class, who, from failure of employment, and the depression of wages, were plunged into despair, while numbers of them quitted their homes, and sought a precarious and scanty relief, by dragging through the country loaded wagons and carts, like beasts of burden? Is it in the rapid and portentous multiplication of crimes, by which our prisons are glutted with malefactors? If these are indications of increasing prosperity, we may justly adopt the language of the liturgy, from such prosperity, "Good Lord, deliver us."

To do the writer justice, he has the grace to admit something like an exception respecting the agricultural interest, though he expresses himself with the diffidence becoming the solution of so difficult a problem. "If any exception," he says, "can be found, it is in the agricultural interest;" but he adds, "If those are to be believed *who ought to be judges*, "this is to be ascribed to the want of legal protection." Now, two corn-bills have been passed of late years for the express

protection of the agriculturist; the last of these in open contempt of the sentiments and wishes of the people. Previously to the passing of these bills, agriculture was in a comparatively flourishing state; since these laws were enacted it has experienced a depression beyond all example; and, in the face of these facts, this writer has the assurance to inform us, that in the opinion of those *who ought to be judges*, the evil is wholly to be ascribed to the *want* of legal protection. But who are these highly privileged mortals, who are to be implicitly believed, because they "ought to be judges?" If there is any class of persons whose opinion on these questions is entitled to deference and respect, they are undoubtedly political economists, men who have made the sources of national wealth the principal subject of their inquiry: and where will he find one, from Adam Smith to the present time, who has not reprobated the interference of the legislature with the price of corn? To say nothing of the reasoning of that great philosopher, which is unanswerable, common sense will teach us, that laws to raise the price of produce are unjust and oppressive taxes upon the whole community, for the exclusive benefit of a part. There is a description of men who are accustomed systematically to yield up their understandings to others, who in their view "ought to be judges:" it is needless to add, that the present writer is evidently of this *servum pecus*, this tame and passive herd: and that his knowledge of the subject is just what might be expected from one who thinks by proxy. These men, forgetting, or affecting to forget, that the exercise of power, in whatever hands it is placed, will infallibly degenerate into tyranny, unless it is carefully watched, make it their whole business to screen its abuses; to suppress inquiry, stifle complaint, and inculcate on the people, as their duty, a quiet and implicit submission to the direction of those who, to speak in the vocabulary of slaves, "ought to be "judges." These are the men by whom the constitution is endangered; these the maxims by which free states are enslaved. If that freedom which is the birthright of Britons is destined to go down to succeeding generations, it must result from the prevalence of an opposite spirit; a lofty enthusiasm, an ardent attachment to liberty, and an incessant jealousy of the tendency of power to enlarge its pretensions and extend its encroachments.

The Reviewer asserts, that "my whole pamphlet is an argument in favour of the supremacy and infallibility of the "people, and of the necessity of paying an implicit obedience "to the least expression of their will."

This, I must assure the reader, is a gross and wilful misrepresentation. In no part of the pamphlet have I pleaded for any such doctrine. All that I have asserted is, that in proportion as the *House of Commons* is in unison with the people, animated by the same sympathies, and affected by the same interests, in the same proportion will it accomplish the design of its functions as a *representative* assembly; and that a reform is absolutely necessary in order to restore it to that conjunction of interests and of feelings on which its utility, as the popular branch of the legislature, depends. The necessity of such an union between the people and their representatives, is manifest from the very meaning of the terms, for it were quite needless for them to be at the pains of choosing men who, in consequence of a foreign bias, are prepared to contradict their sentiments and neglect their interests. A House of Commons which should chiefly consist of court sycophants and tyrants, would exhibit nothing more than the mockery of representation. By artfully transferring what I have said of *one* branch of the legislature to the *whole*, and presenting even that in an exaggerated form, he has represented me as reducing the government to such an immediate and incessant dependence on the popular will, as never entered my thoughts, and would be utterly incompatible with the genius of a limited monarchy.

Having already trespassed on the patience of my readers, I shall close with one remark on the eulogium pronounced by the Reviewer on the character of the late Mr. Pitt. He appears to be extremely shocked with the freedom and severity of my strictures on his conduct, as of implying "a forgetfulness "at his singular disinterestedness, and his perfect devotion to "his country." As this has become a favourite topic with the admirers of that celebrated minister, it is necessary to remind them, that there are other vices besides the love of money, and other virtues besides that of dying poor. It may be easily admitted, that the ambition which grasps at the direction of an empire and the pitiful passion for accumulation, were not the inmates of the same bosom. In minds of a superior order,

ambition, like Aaron's rod, is quite sufficient to swallow up the whole fry of petty propensities. Far be it from me to wish to withhold an atom of the praise justly due to him. That he devoted much time, and a considerable portion of talent, to the affairs of his country, is undeniable. The evils which he has brought upon us were not the production of an ordinary mind, nor the work of a day, nor done in sport; but what I contend for is, that to say nothing of his unparalleled apostacy, his devotion to his country, and what was worse, its devotion to him, have been the source of more calamity to this nation than any other event that has befallen it; and that the memory of Pitt will be identified in the recollection of posterity with accumulated taxes, augmented debt, extended pauperism, a debasement and prostration of the public mind, and a system of policy not only hostile to the cause of liberty at home, but prompt and eager to detect and tread out every spark of liberty in Europe; in a word, with all those images of terror and destruction which the name imports. The enthusiasm with which his character is regarded by a numerous class of his countrymen will be ascribed, by a distant age, to that mysterious infatuation which, in the inscrutable counsels of Heaven, is the usual, the destined precursor of the fall of states.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

ROBERT HALL.

LEICESTER, *Feb.* 5, 1822.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

Some excellent persons, who did not know Mr. Hall, often express great concern that so good a man should have suffered his thoughts to be so much engrossed in politics, as they suppose must have been the case. The truth, however, is, that few men gave themselves less to political matters than he did. At the deeply interesting period in which he wrote his political tracts, the whole world was absorbed in the contemplation of political events, and the discussion of political principles. Among the disputants of the two great parties into which this country was divided, clergymen and other ministers took a most active part, and the class denominated Evangelical were by no means the least active. Some of the most eminent of them, indeed, engaged in that sad and then frequent profanation of holy places and things, the consecration of the colours of a volunteer corps in a parish church; and one even put on a military cockade, in order to incite his parishioners to come forward in the public cause. The genuine principles of our admirable constitution were thought by many to be in imminent peril; yet all who wrote in their defence were exposed to obloquy. A learned prelate asserted, in the House of Lords, that "the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them," and his sentiment was loudly applauded. In a kindred spirit, during the trials of Muir and Palmer for "leasing-making," or sedition, in Scotland, one of the Lords of Justiciary declared that "*no man had a right to speak* "*of the Constitution unless he possessed landed property;*" and another affirmed that, "*since the abolition of* TORTURE, *there was no adequate* "*punishment for sedition.*" In such a season of violent excitement, when upright men of every shade of opinion thought the most valuable principles at stake, no wonder that heats and animosities prevailed, and that all expressed themselves with vehemence,—often with acerbity. Mr. Hall, then under thirty years of age, was of too ardent and generous a spirit to be quiescent in that signal crisis of public affairs. He discharged what, in the exigency, appeared to him an imperious duty, and then remained silent, until, after an interval of many years, at the entreaty of his friends, he broke the silence in a brief effort of self-defence against anonymous misrepresentation. It was, indeed, his permanent conviction (see *post*, 'Funeral Sermon for the Princess Charlotte of Wales,') "that the teachers of religion are called to a nobler occupation than to subserve the interests of party, or fan the flames of public dissension." Nay, for some years, so great was his indifference to political concerns, that he scarcely ever read a newspaper, or did more in conversation than

advert for a moment, if at all, to public measures. His political principles, however, remained the same through life, with those simple modifications which the lapse of time and the occurrence of new events were calculated to produce in the breast of a considerate man. Though he thought them important, he uniformly regarded them as subordinate to others. He cherished with delight the anticipations of a new and better order of things amongst mankind; but he looked mainly for the realising of his hopes to the operation of a higher class of principles than the politics of this world can supply—principles of heavenly origin, which, flowing from religious Truth, and acting at once upon the spiritual part of our nature, change and improve the mass of society by transforming the characters of the men who compose it.

Some of the following pieces yield ample proofs of the prevalence of these sentiments.

That there are occasions on which pious men not only may, but must, if they act fully on Scriptural principles, censure public men and public measures, has been clearly shown by one of the gentlest as well as most excellent of men—GRANVILLE SHARPE—in his Essay on '*The Law of Passive Obedience.*'

MODERN INFIDELITY CONSIDERED WITH RESPECT TO ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY:

IN

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE BAPTIST MEETING, CAMBRIDGE.

IN NOVEMBER, 1799.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

St. Paul.

"Sunt qui in fortunæ jam casibus omnia ponant,
Et nullo credant mundum rectore moveri,
Natura volvente vices et lucis et anni;
Atque ideo intrepidi quæcunque altaria tangunt."

Pers.

PREFACE.

The author knows not whether it be necessary to apologize for the extraordinary length of this sermon, which so much exceeds the usual limits of public discourses; for it is only for the reader to conceive (by a fiction of the imagination, if he pleases so to consider it) that the patience of his audience indulged him with their attention during its delivery. The fact is, not being in the habit of writing his sermons, this discourse was not committed to paper till after it was delivered: so that the phraseology may probably vary, and the bulk be somewhat extended: but the substance is certainly retained.

He must crave the indulgence of the religious public for having blended so little *theology* with it. He is fully aware that the chief attention of a Christian minister should be occupied in explaining the doctrines, and enforcing the duties, of genuine Christianity. Nor is he chargeable, he hopes, in the exercise of his public functions, with any remarkable deviation from this rule of conduct: yet he is equally convinced, excursions into other topics are sometimes both lawful and necessary. The versatility of error demands a correspondent variety in the methods of defending truth: and from whom have the public more right to expect its defence, in opposition to the encroachments of error and infidelity, than from those who profess to devote their studies and their lives to the advancement of virtue and religion? Accordingly, a multitude of publications on these subjects, equally powerful in argument, and impressive in manner, have issued from divines of different persuasions, which must be allowed to have done the utmost honour to the clerical profession. The most luminous statements of the evidences of Christianity, on historical grounds, have been made; the petulant cavils of infidels satisfactorily refuted; and their ignorance, if not put to shame, at least amply exposed: so that revelation, as far as truth and reason can prevail, is on all sides triumphant.

There is one point of view, however, in which the respective systems remain to be examined, which, though hitherto

little considered, is forced upon our attention by the present conduct of our adversaries; that is, their *influence on society.* The controversy appears to have taken a new turn. The advocates of infidelity, baffled in the field of argument, though unwilling to relinquish the contest, have changed their mode of attack; and seem less disposed to impugn the authority, than to supersede the use, of revealed religion, by giving such representations of man and of society as are calculated to make its sanctions appear unreasonable and unnecessary. Their aim is not so much to discredit the pretensions of any particular religion as to set aside the principles common to all.

To obliterate the sense of Deity, of moral sanctions, and a future world; and by these means to prepare the way for the total subversion of every institution, both social and religious, which men have been hitherto accustomed to revere, is evidently the principal object of modern sceptics; the first sophists who have avowed an attempt to govern the world, without inculcating the persuasion of a superior power. It might well excite our surprise to behold an effort to shake off the yoke of religion, which was totally unknown during the prevalence of gross superstition, reserved for a period of the world distinguished from every other by the possession of a revelation more pure, more perfect, and better authenticated, than the enlightened sages of antiquity ever ventured to anticipate, were we not fully persuaded the immaculate holiness of this revelation is precisely that which renders it disgusting to men who are determined at all events to retain their vices. Our Saviour furnishes the solution:— *They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; neither will they come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.*

While all the religions, the Jewish excepted, which, previous to the promulgation of Christianity, prevailed in the world, partly the contrivance of human policy, partly the offspring of ignorant fear, mixed with the mutilated remains of traditionary revelation, were favourable to the indulgence of some vices, and but feebly restrained the practice of others; betwixt vice of every sort and in every degree, and the religion of Jesus, there subsists an irreconcilable enmity, an eternal discord. The dominion of Christianity being, in the very essence of it, the dominion of virtue, we need look no

further for the sources of hostility in any who oppose it, than their attachment to vice and disorder.

This view of the controversy, if it be just, demonstrates its supreme importance; and furnishes the strongest plea, with every one with whom it is not a matter of indifference whether vice or virtue, delusion or truth, govern the world, to exert his talents, in whatever proportion they are possessed, in *contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.* In such a crisis, is it not best for Christians of all denominations, that they may better concentrate their forces against the common adversary, to suspend for the present their internal disputes; imitating the policy of wise states, who have never failed to consider the invasion of an enemy as a signal for terminating the contests of party? Internal peace is the best fruit we can reap from external danger. The momentous contest at issue betwixt the Christian church and infidels may instruct us how trivial, for the most part, are the controversies of its members with each other; and that the different ceremonies, opinions, and practices, by which they are distinguished, correspond to the variety of feature and complexion discernible in the offspring of the same parent, among whom there subsists the greatest family likeness. May it please God so to dispose the minds of Christians of every visible church and community, *that Ephraim may no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim;* that the only rivalry felt in future may be, who shall most advance the interests of our common Christianity; and the only provocation sustained, that of *provoking each other to love and good works!* When, at the distance of more than half a century, Christianity was assaulted by a *Woolston*, a *Tindal*, and a *Morgan*, it was ably supported, both by clergymen of the established church, and writers among Protestant Dissenters. The labours of a *Clarke* and a *Butler* were associated with those of a *Doddridge*, a *Leland*, and a *Lardner*, with such equal reputation and success, as to make it evident that the intrinsic excellence of religion needs not the aid of external appendages; but that, with or without a dowry, her charms are of sufficient power to fix and engage the heart.

The writer of this discourse will feel himself happy, should his example stimulate any of his brethren, of superior abilities, to contribute their exertions in so good a cause. His

apology for not entering more at large into the proofs of the being of a God,* and the evidences of Christianity,† is, that these subjects have been already handled with great ability by various writers; and that he wished rather to confine himself to one view of the subject—The total incompatibility of sceptical principles with the existence of society. Should his life be spared, he may probably, at some future time, enter into a fuller and more particular examination of the infidel philosophy, both with respect to its speculative principles and its practical effects; its influence on society, and on the individual. In the mean time he humbly consecrates this discourse to the honour of that Saviour, who, when the means of a more liberal offering are wanting, commends the widow's mite.

CAMBRIDGE,
January 18, 1800.

* See an excellent sermon on Atheism, by the Rev. Mr. Estlin, of Bristol, at whose meeting the substance of this discourse was first preached. In the sermon referred to, the argument for the existence of a Deity is stated with the utmost clearness and precision; and the sophistry of Dupuis, a French infidel, refuted in a very satisfactory manner.

† It is almost superfluous to name a work so universally known as Dr. Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity, which is probably, without exception, the most clear and satisfactory statement of the historical proofs of the Christian religion ever exhibited in any age or country.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

NOTHING can be more erroneous than the idea, entertained by a few persons, that Mr. Hall recited his sermons *memoriter*, from the study of a previously written composition. His eloquence was the spontaneous result of his vigorous and richly stored intellect, and needed not the aid of the usual expedients of men of ordinary mind. There is great reason to believe that, during the entire extent of his ministry, he only committed one sermon to memory from a previously composed manuscript, and that was 'Reflections on War.' It was preached on a day of thanksgiving, at the termination of a long and dreadful war; it was a publicly announced sermon, to aid the funds of a benevolent society: persons of different religious and political sentiments were expected to be assembled, at a time when the violent party-feelings excited by the French Revolution of 1789 had been but little subsided; and Mr. Hall, afraid of yielding to his own emotions on such an occasion, and perhaps of disturbing the feelings of harmony which it was hoped would prevail, thought it advisable for once to deviate from his usual course. That course was, very briefly to sketch, commonly upon a sheet of letter paper (in some cases rather more fully), the plan of the proposed discourse, marking the divisions, specifying a few texts, and sometimes writing the first sentence; or, occasionally, a few other sentences, especially in those parts where an argument could not be adequately stated without great technical correctness of language. This he regarded as "digging a channel for his thoughts to flow in." Then, calling into exercise the power of abstraction, which he possessed in a degree I never saw equalled, he would, whether alone or not, pursue his trains of thought, retrace and extend them, until the whole were engraven on his mind; and, when once so fixed in their entire connexion, they were never after obliterated. The result was on all occasions the same; so that without recurring to the ordinary expedients, or loading his memory with words and phrases, he uniformly brought his mind, with an unburdened vigour and elasticity, to bear upon its immediate purpose, recalling the selected train of thought, and communicating it to others in diction the most felicitous, appropriate, and impressive. This was uniformly the case with regard to the tenour and substance of his discourses; but the most striking and impressive passages were often, strictly speaking, extemporaneous.

On various occasions I have ascertained the correctness of his recollection as to trains of thought and matters of arrangement. Thus, on drawing his attention fully to an interesting conversation which occurred nearly thirty years before, he has given as vivid and graphic a sketch of the persons present, their positions in the room, and of the main topics discussed, as though all had occurred in the preceding week. So again, with respect to sermons preached early in the present century, and which seemed to have entirely escaped from his recollection; when a reference to some illustration, or the mode of treating some subsidiary topic, has supplied the adequate clew, he has accurately described the plan, the reasoning, the object of the discourse, the illustrations employed, the principal texts adduced, &c., dwelling especially, as was always most natural to him, upon the parts that he regarded as defective.

The history of the following sermon, on 'Modern Infidelity,' may serve still further to illustrate the peculiar structure of Mr. Hall's intellect. He preached it first at Bristol, in October, 1799, and again at Cambridge early in the month of November. Having yielded to the solicitations of his friends, and consented to its publication, there remained two difficulties, that of writing down the sermon (of which not a single sentence was upon paper), and that of superintending the press. I, who then resided at Cambridge, offered to undertake both these, provided he would engage not to go farther than ten miles from Cambridge, and allow me to follow him, wherever he went, to obtain "copy," as it should be needed. He acceded to that part of the arrangement which related to the printing; but would not consent that I should be his amanuensis on that occasion. The writing, therefore, he undertook himself, but with great reluctance, on account of the severe pain which even then (and, indeed, much earlier) he experienced when remaining long in a sitting posture. The work, in consequence, proceeded slowly, and with many interruptions. At first I obtained from him eight pages, and took them to the printer; after a few days, four pages more; then two or three pages; then a more violent attack of his distressing pain in the back compelled him to write two or three pages *while lying on the floor;* and soon afterwards a still more violent paroxysm occasioned a longer suspension of his labour. After an interval of a week, the work was renewed at the joint entreaty of myself and other friends. It was pursued in the same manner, two or three pages being obtained for the printer at one time, a similar portion after a day or two, until, at the end of seven weeks, the task was completed. During the whole time of the composition, thus conducted, Mr. Hall never saw a single page of the printer's work. When I applied for more "copy," he asked what it was that he had written last, and then proceeded. Very often, after he had given me a

small portion, he would inquire if he had written it nearly in the words which he had employed in delivering the sermon orally. After he had written down the striking apostrophe which occurs at page 292 of the present edition—"Eternal God! on what are thine enemies intent! what are those enterprises of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of Heaven must not *penetrate!*"—he asked, "Did I say *penetrate*, Sir, when I preached it?" "Yes." "Do you think, Sir, I may venture to alter it? for no man who considered the force of the English language would use a word of three syllables there, but from absolute necessity." "You are doubtless at liberty to alter it, if you think well." "Then be so good, Sir, to take your pencil, and for *penetrate* put *pierce; pierce* is the word, Sir, and the only word to be used there." I have now the evidence of this before me, in the entire manuscript, which I carefully preserve among my richest literary treasures.

At the end of seven weeks Mr. Hall's labour, thus conducted, being, greatly to his delight, brought to a close, I presented him with a complete copy of his printed sermon, *not one word* of which he had seen in its progress.

During this interval, he had preached at least twenty times, had paid his pastoral visits, as usual, had been often in the society of the literary men with whom he then associated, and had, with all his characteristic ardour, carried on, simultaneously, two distinct courses of reading.

I mistake greatly, if, after the perusal of this simple narrative, the reader will not turn to the sermon with additional relish, and meditate with augmented pleasure upon the peculiarities of this most valuable production, and the singular character of its author's mind.

OLINTHUS GREGORY.

ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY,
June 1, 1831.

A SERMON.

EPHES. ii. 12.

Without God in the world.

As the Christian ministry is established for the instruction of men, throughout every age, in truth and holiness, it must adapt itself to the ever-shifting scenes of the moral world, and stand ready to repel the attacks of impiety and error, under whatever form they may appear. The church and the world constitute two societies so distinct, and are governed by such opposite principles and maxims, that, as well from this contrariety, as from the express warnings of Scripture, true Christians must look for a state of warfare, with this consoling assurance, that the church, like the burning bush beheld by Moses in the land of Midian, may be encompassed with flames, but will never be consumed.

When she was delivered from the persecuting power of Rome, she only experienced a change of trials. The oppression of external violence was followed by the more dangerous and insidious attacks of internal enemies. The freedom of inquiry claimed and asserted at the reformation, degenerated, in the hands of men who professed the principles without possessing the spirit of the reformers, into a fondness for speculative refinements; and consequently into a source of dispute, faction, and heresy. While Protestants attended more to the points on which they differed than to those on which they agreed; while more zeal was employed in settling ceremonies and defending subtleties, than in enforcing plain revealed truths; the lovely fruits of peace and charity perished under the storms of controversy.

In this disjointed and disordered state of the Christian church, they who never looked into the interior of Christianity were apt to suspect, that to a subject so fruitful in particular disputes must attach a general uncertainty; and that a religion founded on revelation could never have occasioned such discordancy of principle and practice among its disciples. Thus

infidelity is the joint offspring of an irreligious temper, and unholy speculation, employed, not in examining the evidences of Christianity, but in detecting the vices and imperfections of professing Christians. It has passed through various stages, each distinguished by higher gradations of impiety; for when men arrogantly abandon their guide, and wilfully shut their eyes on the light of heaven, it is wisely ordained that their errors shall multiply at every step, until their extravagance confutes itself, and the mischief of their principles works its own antidote. That such has been the progress of infidelity will be obvious from a slight survey of its history.

Lord HERBERT, the first and purest of our English free-thinkers, who flourished in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First, did not so much impugn the doctrine or the morality of the Scriptures, as attempt to supersede their necessity, by endeavouring to show that the great principles of the unity of God—a moral government, and a future world—are taught with sufficient clearness by the light of nature. BOLINGBROKE, and some of his successors, advanced much farther, and attempted to invalidate the proofs of the moral character of the Deity, and consequently all expectations of rewards and punishments; leaving the Supreme Being no other perfections than those which belong to a first cause, or almighty contriver. After him, at a considerable distance, followed HUME, the most subtle, if not the most philosophical of the Deists; who, by perplexing the relations of cause and effect, boldly aimed to introduce an universal scepticism, and to pour a more than Egyptian darkness into the whole region of morals. Since his time sceptical writers have sprung up in abundance, and infidelity has allured multitudes to its standard: the young and the superficial by its dexterous sophistry, the vain by the literary reputation of its champions, and the profligate by the licentiousness of its principles. Atheism, the most undisguised, has at length begun to make its appearance.

Animated by numbers, and emboldened by success, the infidels of the present day have given a new direction to their efforts, and impressed a new character on the ever-growing mass of their impious speculations.

By uniting more closely with each other, by giving a sprinkling of irreligion to all their literary productions, they aim to engross the formation of the public mind; and, amidst

the warmest professions of attachment to virtue, to effect an entire disruption of morality from religion. Pretending to be the teachers of virtue, and the guides of life, they propose to revolutionize the morals of mankind; to regenerate the world by a process entirely new; and to rear the temple of virtue, not merely without the aid of religion, but on the renunciation of its principles, and the derision of its sanctions. Their party has derived a great accession of numbers and strength from events the most momentous and astonishing in the political world, which have divided the sentiments of Europe betwixt hope and terror; and which, however they may issue, have, for the present, swelled the ranks of infidelity. So rapidly, indeed, has it advanced since this crisis, that a great majority on the continent, and in England a considerable proportion of those who pursue literature as a profession,* may justly be considered as the open or disguised abettors of atheism.

With respect to the sceptical and religious systems, the inquiry at present is not so much which is the truest in speculation, as which is the most useful in practice; or, in other words, whether morality will be best promoted by considering it as a part of a great and comprehensive law, emanating from the will of a supreme, omnipotent legislator; or as a mere expedient, adapted to our present situation, enforced by no other motives than those which arise from the prospects and interests of the present state. The absurdity of atheism having been demonstrated so often and so clearly by many eminent men, that this part of the subject is exhausted, I should hasten immediately to what I have more particularly in view, were I not apprehensive a discourse of this kind may be expected to contain some statement of the argument in proof of a Deity; which, therefore, I shall present in as few and plain words as possible.

When we examine a watch, or any other piece of machinery, we instantly perceive marks of design. The arrangement of its several parts, and the adaptation of its movements to one result, show it to be a contrivance; nor do we ever imagine the faculty of contriving to be in the watch itself, but in a

* By those who pursue literature as a profession, the author would be understood to mean that numerous class of literary men who draw their principal subsistence from their writings.

separate agent. If we turn from art to nature, we behold a vast magazine of contrivances; we see innumerable objects replete with the most exquisite design. The human eye, for example, is formed with admirable skill for the purpose of sight, the ear for the function of hearing. As in the productions of art we never think of ascribing the power of contrivance to the machine itself, so we are certain the skill displayed in the human structure is not a property of man, since he is very imperfectly acquainted with his own formation. If there be an inseparable relation betwixt the ideas of a contrivance and a contriver; and it be evident, in regard to the human structure, the designing agent is not man himself, there must undeniably be some separate invisible being who is his former. This great Being we mean to indicate by the appellation of Deity.

This reasoning admits but of one reply. Why, it will be said, may we not suppose the world has been always continued as it is; that is, that there has been a constant succession of finite beings, appearing and disappearing on the earth from all eternity? I answer, Whatever is supposed to have occasioned this constant succession, exclusive of an intelligent cause, will never account for the undeniable marks of design visible in all finite beings. Nor is the absurdity of supposing a contrivance without a contriver diminished by this imaginary succession; but rather increased, by being repeated at every step of the series.

Besides, an eternal succession of finite beings involves in it a contradiction, and is therefore plainly impossible. As the supposition is made to get quit of the idea of any one having existed from eternity, each of the beings in the succession must have begun in time: but the succession itself is eternal. We have then the succession of beings infinitely earlier than any being in the succession; or, in other words, a series of beings running on, *ad infinitum*, before it reached any particular being, which is absurd.

From these considerations it is manifest there must be some eternal Being, or nothing could ever have existed: and since the beings which we behold bear in their whole structure evident marks of wisdom and design, it is equally certain that he who formed them is a wise and intelligent agent.

To prove the unity of this great Being, in opposition to a plurality of gods, it is not necessary to have recourse to metaphysical abstractions. It is sufficient to observe, that the notion of more than one author of nature is inconsistent with that harmony of design which pervades her works; that it explains no appearances, is supported by no evidence, and serves no purpose but to embarrass and perplex our conceptions.

Such are the proofs of the existence of that great and glorious Being whom we denominate God; and it is not presumption to say it is impossible to find another truth in the whole compass of morals, which, according to the justest laws of reasoning, admits of such strict and rigorous demonstration.

But I proceed to the more immediate object of this discourse, which, as has been already intimated, is not so much to evince the falsehood of scepticism as a theory, as to display its mischievous effects, contrasted with those which result from the belief of a Deity and a future state. The subject, viewed in this light, may be considered under two aspects; the influence of the opposite systems on the principles of morals, and on the formation of character. The first may be styled their direct, the latter their equally important, but indirect consequence and tendency.

I. The sceptical or irreligious system subverts the whole foundation of morals. It may be assumed as a maxim, that no person can be required to act contrarily to his greatest good, or his highest interest, comprehensively viewed in relation to the whole duration of his being. It is often our duty to forego our own interest *partially*, to sacrifice a smaller pleasure for the sake of a greater, to incur a present evil in pursuit of a distant good of more consequence. In a word, to arbitrate amongst interfering claims of inclination is the moral arithmetic of human life. But to risk the happiness of the whole duration of our being in any case whatever, were it possible, would be foolish; because the sacrifice must, by the nature of it, be so great as to preclude the possibility of compensation.

As the present world, on sceptical principles, is the only place of recompense, whenever the practice of virtue fails to

promise the greatest sum of present good (cases which often occur in reality, and much oftener in appearance), every motive to virtuous conduct is superseded; a deviation from rectitude becomes the part of wisdom; and, should the path of virtue, in addition to this, be obstructed by disgrace, torment, or death, to persevere would be madness and folly, and a violation of the first and most essential law of nature. Virtue, on these principles, being in numberless instances at war with self-preservation, never can, or ought to become, a fixed habit of the mind.

The system of infidelity is not only incapable of arming virtue for great and trying occasions, but leaves it unsupported in the most ordinary occurrences. In vain will its advocates appeal to a moral sense, to benevolence and sympathy; for it is undeniable that these impulses may be overcome. In vain will they expatiate on the tranquillity and pleasure attendant on a virtuous course: for though you may remind the offender that in disregarding them he has violated his nature, and that a conduct consistent with them is productive of much internal satisfaction; yet if he reply that his taste is of a different sort, that there are other gratifications which he values more, and that every man must choose his own pleasures, the argument is at an end.

Rewards and punishments, assigned by infinite power, afford a palpable and pressing motive which can never be neglected without renouncing the character of a rational creature: but tastes and relishes are not to be prescribed.

A motive in which the reason of man shall acquiesce, enforcing the practice of virtue at all times and seasons, enters into the very essence of moral obligation. Modern infidelity supplies no such motives: it is therefore essentially and infallibly a system of enervation, turpitude, and vice.

This chasm in the construction of morals can only be supplied by the firm belief of a rewarding and avenging Deity, who binds duty and happiness, though they may seem distant, in an indissoluble chain; without which whatever usurps the name of virtue is not a principle, but a feeling; not a determinate rule, but a fluctuating expedient, varying with the tastes of individuals, and changing with the scenes of life.

Nor is this the only way in which infidelity subverts the

foundation of morals. All reasoning on morals presupposes a distinction between inclinations and duties, affections and rules. The former prompt, the latter prescribe. The former supply motives to action, the latter regulate and control it. Hence it is evident, if virtue have any just claim to authority, it must be under the latter of these notions, that is, under the character of a law. It is under this notion, *in fact*, that its dominion has ever been acknowledged to be paramount and supreme.

But without the intervention of a superior will, it is impossible there should be any moral laws, except in the lax metaphorical sense in which we speak of the laws of matter and motion. Men being essentially equal, morality is, on these principles, only a stipulation or silent compact, into which every individual is supposed to enter, as far as suits his convenience, and for the breach of which he is accountable to nothing but his own mind. His own mind is his law, his tribunal, and his judge!

Two consequences, the most disastrous to society, will inevitably follow the general prevalence of this system;—the frequent perpetration of great crimes, and the total absence of great virtues.

1. In those conjunctures which tempt avarice or inflame ambition, when a crime flatters with the prospect of impunity, and the certainty of immense advantage, what is to restrain an atheist from its commission? To say that remorse will deter him is absurd; for remorse, as distinguished from pity, is the sole offspring of religious belief, the extinction of which is the great purpose of the infidel philosophy.

The dread of punishment or infamy, from his fellow-creatures, will be an equally ineffectual barrier; because crimes are only committed under such circumstances as suggest the hope of concealment: not to say that crimes themselves will soon lose their infamy and their horror, under the influence of that system which destroys the sanctity of virtue, by converting it into a low calculation of worldly interest. Here the sense of an ever-present Ruler, and of an avenging Judge, is of the most awful and indispensable necessity; as it is that alone which impresses on all crimes the character of *folly*, shows that duty and interest in every instance coincide, and that the most prosperous career of vice, the most brilliant

successes of criminality, are but an *accumulation of wrath against the day of wrath.*

As the frequent perpetration of great crimes is an inevitable consequence of the diffusion of sceptical principles; so, to understand this consequence in its full extent, we must look beyond their immediate effects, and consider the disruption of social ties, the destruction of confidence, the terror, suspicion, and hatred, which must prevail in that state of society in which barbarous deeds are familiar. The tranquillity which pervades a well-ordered community, and the mutual good offices which bind its members together, are founded on an implied confidence in the indisposition to annoy; in the justice, humanity, and moderation of those among whom we dwell. So that the worst consequence of crimes is, that they impair the stock of public charity and general tenderness. The dread and hatred of our species would infallibly be grafted on a conviction that we were exposed every moment to the surges of an unbridled ferocity, and that nothing but the power of the magistrate stood between us and the daggers of assassins. In such a state, laws, deriving no support from public manners, are unequal to the task of curbing the fury of the passions; which, from being concentrated into selfishness, fear, and revenge, acquire new force. Terror and suspicion beget cruelty, and inflict injuries by way of prevention. Pity is extinguished in the stronger impulse of self-preservation. The tender and generous affections are crushed; and nothing is seen but the retaliation of wrongs, and the fierce and unmitigated struggle for superiority. This is but a faint sketch of the incalculable calamities and horrors we must expect, should we be so unfortunate as ever to witness the triumph of modern infidelity.

2. This system is a soil as barren of great and sublime virtues as it is prolific in crimes. By great and sublime virtues are meant, those which are called into action on great and trying occasions, which demand the sacrifice of the dearest interests and prospects of human life, and sometimes of life itself: the virtues, in a word, which, by their rarity and splendour, draw admiration, and have rendered illustrious the character of patriots, martyrs, and confessors. It requires but little reflection to perceive, that whatever veils a future world, and contracts the limits of existence within the present

life, must tend, in a proportionable degree, to diminish the grandeur and narrow the sphere of human agency.

As well might you expect exalted sentiments of justice from a professed gamester, as look for noble principles in the man whose hopes and fears are all suspended on the present moment, and who stakes the whole happiness of his being on the events of this vain and fleeting life. If he be ever impelled to the performance of great achievements in a good cause, it must be solely by the hope of fame; a motive which, besides that it makes virtue the servant of opinion, usually grows weaker at the approach of death; and which, however it may surmount the love of existence in the heat of battle, or in the moment of public observation, can seldom be expected to operate with much force on the retired duties of a private station.

In affirming that infidelity is unfavourable to the higher class of virtues, we are supported as well by facts as by reasoning. We should be sorry to load our adversaries with unmerited reproach: but to what history, to what record will they appeal for the traits of moral greatness exhibited by their disciples? Where shall we look for the trophies of infidel magnanimity, or atheistical virtue? Not that we mean to accuse them of inactivity: they have recently filled the world with the fame of their exploits; exploits of a different kind indeed, but of imperishable memory and disastrous lustre.

Though it is confessed great and splendid actions are not the ordinary employment of life, but must, from their nature, be reserved for high and eminent occasions; yet that system is essentially defective which leaves no room for their production. They are important, both from their immediate advantage and their remoter influence. They often save, and always illustrate, the age and nation in which they appear. They raise the standard of morals; they arrest the progress of degeneracy; they diffuse a lustre over the path of life: monuments of the greatness of the human soul, they present to the world the august image of virtue in her sublimest form, from which streams of light and glory issue to remote times and ages; while their commemoration, by the pens of historians and poets, awakens in distant bosoms the sparks of kindred excellence.

Combine the frequent and familiar perpetration of atrocious

deeds with the dearth of great and generous actions, and you have the exact picture of that condition of society which completes the degradation of the species—the frightful contrast of dwarfish virtues and gigantic vices, where every thing good is mean and little, and every thing evil is rank and luxuriant: a dead and sickening uniformity prevails, broken only at intervals by volcanic eruptions of anarchy and crime.

II. Hitherto we have considered the influence of scepticism on the principles of virtue; and have endeavoured to show that it despoils it of its dignity, and lays its authority in the dust. Its influence on the formation of character remains to be examined. The actions of men are oftener determined by their character than their interest; their conduct takes its colour more from their acquired taste, inclinations, and habits, than from a deliberate regard to their greatest good. It is only on great occasions the mind awakes to take an extended survey of her whole course, and that she suffers the dictates of reason to impress a new bias upon her movements. The actions of each day are, for the most part, links which follow each other in the chain of custom. Hence the great effort of practical wisdom is to imbue the mind with right tastes, affections, and habits; the elements of character, and masters of action.

1. The exclusion of a supreme Being, and of a superintending Providence, tends directly to the destruction of moral taste. It robs the universe of all finished and consummate excellence, even in idea. The admiration of perfect wisdom and goodness for which we are formed, and which kindles such unspeakable raptures in the soul, finding in the regions of scepticism nothing to which it corresponds, droops and languishes. In a world which presents a fair spectacle of order and beauty, of a vast family nourished and supported by an almighty Parent; in a world which leads the devout mind, step by step, to the contemplation of the first fair and the first good, the sceptic is encompassed with nothing but obscurity, meanness, and disorder.

When we reflect on the manner in which the idea of Deity is formed, we must be convinced that such an idea, intimately present to the mind, must have a most powerful effect in refining the moral taste. Composed of the richest

elements, it embraces in the character of a beneficent Parent and almighty Ruler whatever is venerable in wisdom, whatever is awful in authority, whatever is touching in goodness.

Human excellence is blended with many imperfections, and seen under many limitations. It is beheld only in detached and separate portions, nor ever appears in any one character whole and entire. So that when, in imitation of the stoics, we wish to form out of these fragments the notion of a perfectly wise and good man, we know it is a mere fiction of the mind, without any real being in whom it is embodied and realized. In the belief of a Deity, these conceptions are reduced to reality: the scattered rays of an ideal excellence are concentrated, and become the real attributes of that Being with whom we stand in the nearest relation, who sits supreme at the head of the universe, is armed with infinite power, and pervades all nature with his presence.

The efficacy of these views in producing and augmenting a virtuous taste, will indeed be proportioned to the vividness with which they are formed, and the frequency with which they recur; yet some benefit will not fail to result from them even in their lowest degree.

The idea of the Supreme Being has this peculiar property; that, as it admits of no substitute, so from the first moment it is formed, it is capable of continual growth and enlargement. God himself is immutable; but our conception of his character is continually receiving fresh accessions, is continually growing more extended and refulgent, by having transferred to it new elements of beauty and goodness; by attracting to itself, as a centre, whatever bears the impress of dignity, order, or happiness. It borrows splendour from all that is fair, subordinates to itself all that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe.

As the object of worship will always be, in a degree, the object of imitation, hence arises a fixed standard of moral excellence; by the contemplation of which the tendencies to corruption are counteracted, the contagion of bad example is checked, and human nature rises above its natural level.

When the knowledge of God was lost in the world, just ideas of virtue and moral obligation disappeared along with it. How is it to be otherwise accounted for, that in the

polished nations, and in the enlightened times, of pagan antiquity, the most unnatural lusts and detestable impurities were not only tolerated in private life,* but entered into religion, and formed a material part of public worship;† while among the Jews, a people so much inferior in every other branch of knowledge, the same vices were regarded with horror?

The reason is this: The true character of God was unknown to the former, which by the light of divine revelation was displayed to the latter. The former cast their deities in the mould of their own imaginations, in consequence of which they partook of the vices and defects of their worshippers. To the latter no scope was left for the wanderings of fancy; but a pure and perfect model was prescribed.

False and corrupt, however, as was the religion of the pagans (if it deserve the name), and defective, and often vicious, as was the character of their imaginary deities, it was still better for the world that the void should be filled up with these than abandoned to a total scepticism; for if both systems are equally false, they are not equally pernicious. When the fictions of heathenism consecrated the memory of its legislators and heroes, it invested them for the most part with those qualities which were in the greatest repute. They were supposed to possess in the highest degree the virtues in which it was most honourable to excel; and to be the witnesses, approvers, and patrons of those perfections in others, by which their own character was chiefly distinguished. Men saw, or rather fancied they saw, in these supposed

* It is worthy of observation, that the elegant and philosophic Xenophon, in delineating the model of a perfect prince in the character of Cyrus, introduces a Mede who had formed an unnatural passion for his hero; and relates the incident in a lively, festive humour, without being in the least conscious of any indelicacy attached to it. What must be the state of manners in a country where a circumstance of this kind, feigned, no doubt, by way of ornament, finds a place in such a work? *Cyri Instit.* lib. i.

"Deinde nobis, qui *concedentibus philosophis antiquis*, adolescentulis delectamur, etiam vitia sæpe jucunda sunt." *Cicero De Nat. Dei*, lib. i.

† "—— *Nam quo non prostat fœmina templo?*" Juv.

The impurities practised in the worship of Isis, an Egyptian deity, rose to such a height in the reign of Tiberius, that that profligate prince thought fit to prohibit her worship, and at the same time inflicted on her priests the punishment of crucifixion. *Joseph. Antiq. Judaic.*, lib. xviii.

deities, the qualities they most admired, dilated to a larger size, moving in a higher sphere, and associated with the power, dignity, and happiness of superior natures. With such ideal models before them, and conceiving themselves continually acting under the eye of such spectators and judges, they felt a real elevation; their eloquence became more impassioned, their patriotism inflamed, and their courage exalted.

Revelation, by displaying the true character of God, affords a pure and perfect standard of virtue; heathenism, one in many respects defective and vicious; the fashionable scepticism of the present day, which excludes the belief of all superior powers, affords no standard at all. Human nature knows nothing better or higher than itself. All above and around it being shrouded in darkness, and the prospect confined to the tame realities of life, virtue has no room upwards to expand; nor are any excursions permitted into that unseen world, the true element of the great and good, by which it is fortified with motives equally calculated to satisfy the reason, to delight the fancy, and to impress the heart.

2. Modern infidelity not only tends to corrupt the moral taste; it also promotes the growth of those vices which are the most hostile to social happiness. Of all the vices incident to human nature, the most destructive to society are vanity, ferocity, and unbridled sensuality; and these are precisely the vices which infidelity is calculated to cherish.

That the love, fear, and habitual contemplation of a Being infinitely exalted, or, in other words, devotion, is adapted to promote a sober and moderate estimate of our own excellences, is incontestable; nor is it less evident that the exclusion of such sentiments must be favourable to pride. The criminality of pride will, perhaps, be less readily admitted; for though there is no vice so opposite to the spirit of Christianity, yet there is none which, even in the Christian world, has, under various pretences, been treated with so much indulgence.

There is, it will be confessed, a delicate sensibility to character, a sober desire of reputation, a wish to possess the esteem of the wise and good, felt by the purest minds, which is at the farthest remove from arrogance or vanity. The hu

mility of a noble mind scarcely dares to approve of itself, until it has secured the approbation of others. Very different is that restless desire of distinction, that passion for theatrical display, which inflames the heart and occupies the whole attention of vain men. This, of all the passions, is the most unsocial, avarice itself not excepted. The reason is plain. Property is a kind of good which may be more easily attained, and is capable of more minute subdivisions than fame. In the pursuit of wealth, men are led by an attention to their own interest to promote the welfare of each other; their advantages are reciprocal; the benefits which each is anxious to acquire for himself he reaps in the greatest abundance from the union and conjunction of society. The pursuits of vanity are quite contrary. The portion of time and attention mankind are willing to spare from their avocations and pleasures to devote to the admiration of each other is so small, that every successful adventurer is felt to have impaired the common stock. The success of one is the disappointment of multitudes. For though there be many rich, many virtuous, many wise men, fame must necessarily be the portion of but few. Hence every vain man, every man in whom vanity is the ruling passion, regarding his rival as his enemy, is strongly tempted to rejoice in his miscarriage, and repine at his success.

Besides, as the passions are seldom seen in a simple, unmixed state, so vanity, when it succeeds, degenerates into arrogance; when it is disappointed (and it is often disappointed), it is exasperated into malignity, and corrupted into envy. In this stage the vain man commences a determined misanthropist. He detests that excellence which he cannot reach. He detests his species, and longs to be revenged for the unpardonable injustice he has sustained in their insensibility to his merits. He lives upon the calamities of the world; the vices and miseries of men are his element and his food. Virtues, talents, and genius, are his natural enemies, which he persecutes with instinctive eagerness and unrelenting hostility. There are who doubt the existence of such a disposition; but it certainly issues out of the dregs of disappointed vanity: a disease which taints and vitiates the whole character wherever it prevails. It forms the heart to such a profound indifference to the welfare of others, that, whatever appearances he may assume, or how-

ever wide the circle of his seeming virtues may extend, you will infallibly find the vain man is his own centre. Attentive only to himself, absorbed in the contemplation of his own perfections, instead of feeling tenderness for his fellow-creatures as members of the same family, as beings with whom he is appointed to act, to suffer, and to sympathise; he considers life as a stage on which he is performing a part, and mankind in no other light than spectators. Whether he smiles or frowns, whether his path is adorned with the rays of beneficence, or his steps are dyed in blood, an attention to self is the spring of every movement, and the motive to which every action is referred.

His apparent good qualities lose all their worth, by losing all that is simple, genuine, and natural; they are even pressed into the service of vanity, and become the means of enlarging its power. The truly good man is jealous over himself lest the notoriety of his best actions, by blending itself with their motive, should diminish their value; the vain man performs the same actions for the sake of that notoriety. The good man quietly discharges his duty, and shuns ostentation; the vain man considers every good deed lost that is not publicly displayed. The one is intent upon realities, the other upon semblances; the one aims to *be* virtuous, the other to *appear* so.

Nor is a mind inflated with vanity more disqualified for right action than just speculation, or better disposed to the pursuit of truth than the practice of virtue. To such a mind the simplicity of truth is disgusting. Careless of the improvement of mankind, and intent only upon astonishing with the appearance of novelty, the glare of paradox will be preferred to the light of truth; opinions will be embraced, not because they are just, but because they are new; the more flagitious, the more subversive of morals, the more alarming to the wise and good, the more welcome to men who estimate their literary powers by the mischief they produce, and who consider the anxiety and terror they impress as the measure of their renown. Truth is simple and uniform, while error may be infinitely varied: and as it is one thing to start paradoxes, and another to make discoveries, we need the less wonder at the prodigious increase of modern philosophers.

We have been so much accustomed to consider extravagant

self-estimation merely as a *ridiculous* quality, that many will be surprised to find it treated as a vice pregnant with serious mischief to society. But to form a judgment of its influence on the manners and happiness of a nation, it is necessary only to look at its effects in a family; for bodies of men are only collections of individuals, and the greatest nation is nothing more than an aggregate number of families. Conceive of a domestic circle, in which each member is elated with a most extravagant opinion of himself, and a proportionable contempt of every other; is full of little contrivances to catch applause, and whenever he is not praised is sullen and disappointed. What a picture of disunion, disgust, and animosity would such a family present! How utterly would domestic affection be extinguished, and all the purposes of domestic society be defeated! The general prevalence of such dispositions must be accompanied by an equal proportion of general misery. The tendency of pride to produce strife and hatred is sufficiently apparent from the pains men have been at to construct a system of politeness which is nothing more than a sort of mimic humility, in which the sentiments of an offensive self-estimation are so far disguised and suppressed as to make them compatible with the spirit of society; such a mode of behaviour as would naturally result from an attention to the apostolic injunction: *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves.* But if the semblance be of such importance, how much more useful the reality! If the mere garb of humility be of such indispensable necessity that without it society could not subsist, how much better still would the harmony of the world be preserved, were the condescension, deference, and respect, so studiously displayed, a true picture of the heart!

The same restless and eager vanity which disturbs a family, when it is permitted in a great national crisis to mingle with political affairs, distracts a kingdom; infusing into those intrusted with the enaction of laws, a spirit of rash innovation and daring empiricism, a disdain of the established usages of mankind, a foolish desire to dazzle the world with new and untried systems of policy, in which the precedents of antiquity and the experience of ages are only consulted to be trodden under foot; and into the executive department of government,

a fierce contention for pre-eminence, an incessant struggle to supplant and destroy, with a propensity to calumny and suspicion, proscription and massacre.

We shall suffer the most eventful season ever witnessed in the affairs of men to pass over our heads to very little purpose, if we fail to learn from it some useful lessons on the nature and progress of the passions. The true light in which the French revolution ought to be contemplated is that of a grand experiment on human nature. Among the various passions which that revolution has so strikingly displayed, none is more conspicuous than vanity; nor is it less difficult, without adverting to the national character of the people, to account for its extraordinary predominance. Political power, the most seducing object of ambition, never before circulated through so many hands; the prospect of possessing it was never before presented to many minds. Multitudes who, by their birth and education, and not unfrequently by their talents, seemed destined to perpetual obscurity, were, by the alternate rise and fall of parties, elevated into distinction, and shared in the functions of government. The short-lived forms of power and office glided with such rapidity through successive ranks of degradation, from the court to the very dregs of the populace, that they seemed rather to solicit acceptance than to be a prize contended for.* Yet, as it was still impossible for all to possess authority, though none were willing to obey, a general impatience to break the ranks and rush into the foremost ground maddened and infuriated the nation, and overwhelmed law, order, and civilization, with the violence of a torrent.

If such be the mischiefs both in public and private life resulting from an excessive self-estimation, it remains next to be considered whether Providence has supplied any medicine to correct it; for as the reflection on excellences, whether real or imaginary, is always attended with pleasure to the possessor, it is a disease deeply seated in our nature.

Suppose there were a great and glorious Being always present with us, who had given us existence, with numberless other blessings, and on whom we depended each instant, as

* —— "Æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres."—*Hor*

well for every present enjoyment as for every future good: suppose, again, we had incurred the just displeasure of such a Being by ingratitude and disobedience, yet that in great mercy he had not cast us off, but had assured us he was willing to pardon and restore us on our humble entreaty and sincere repentance; say, would not an habitual sense of the presence of this Being, self-reproach for having displeased him, and an anxiety to recover his favour, be the most effectual antidote to pride? But such are the leading discoveries made by the Christian revelation, and such the dispositions which a practical belief of it inspires.

Humility is the first fruit of religion. In the mouth of our Lord there is no maxim so frequent as the following: *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Religion, and that alone, teaches *absolute* humility; by which I mean a sense of our *absolute* nothingness in the view of infinite greatness and excellence. That sense of inferiority which results from the comparison of men with each other is often a disagreeable sentiment forced upon the mind, which may rather embitter the temper than soften it: that which devotion impresses is soothing and delightful. The devout man loves to lie low at the footstool of his Creator, because it is then he attains the most lively perceptions of the divine excellence, and the most tranquil confidence in the divine favour. In so august a presence he sees all distinctions lost, and all beings reduced to the same level. He looks at his superiors without envy, and his inferiors without contempt: and when from this elevation he descends to mix in society, the conviction of superiority, which must in many instances be felt, is a calm inference of the understanding, and no longer a busy, importunate passion of the heart.

The wicked (says the Psalmist) *through the pride of their countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all their thoughts.* When we consider the incredible vanity of the atheistical sect, together with the settled malignity and unrelenting rancour with which they pursue every vestige of religion, is it uncandid to suppose that its humbling tendency is one principal cause of their enmity; that they are eager to displace a Deity from the minds of men, that they may occupy the void; to crumble the throne of the Eternal into dust, that they may elevate themselves on its ruins; and that, as their

licentiousness is impatient of restraint, so their pride disdains a superior?

We mentioned a ferocity of character as one effect of sceptical impiety. It is an inconvenience attending a controversy with those with whom we have few principles in common, that we are often in danger of reasoning inconclusively, for the want of its being clearly known and settled what our opponents admit, and what they deny. The persons, for example, with whom we are at present engaged, have discarded humility and modesty from the catalogue of virtues; on which account we have employed the more time in evincing their importance: but whatever may be thought of humility as a *virtue*, it surely will not be denied that inhumanity is a most detestable *vice;* a vice, however, which scepticism has a most powerful tendency to inflame.

As we have already shown that pride hardens the heart, and that religion is the only effectual antidote, the connexion between irreligion and inhumanity is in this view obvious. But there is another light in which this part of the subject may be viewed, in my humble opinion, much more important, though seldom adverted to. The supposition that man is a moral and accountable being, destined to survive the stroke of death, and to live in a future world in a never-ending state of happiness or misery, makes him a creature of incomparably more *consequence* than the opposite supposition. When we consider him as placed here by an Almighty Ruler in a state of probation, and that the present life is his period of trial, the first link in a vast and interminable chain which stretches into eternity, he assumes a dignified character in our eyes. Everything which relates to him becomes interesting; and to trifle with his happiness is felt to be the most unpardonable levity. If such be the destination of man, it is evident that in the qualities which fit him for it, his principal dignity consists: his moral greatness is his true greatness. Let the sceptical principles be admitted, which represent him, on the contrary, as the offspring of chance, connected with no superior power, and sinking into annihilation at death, and he is a contemptible creature, whose existence and happiness are insignificant. The characteristic difference is lost betwixt him and the brute creation, from which he is no longer distinguished, except by the vividness and multiplicity of his perceptions.

If we reflect on that part of our nature which disposes us to humanity, we shall find that, where we have no particular attachment, our sympathy with the sufferings, and concern for the destruction, of sensitive beings, are in proportion to their supposed importance in the general scale; or, in other words, to their supposed capacity of enjoyment. We feel, for example, much more at witnessing the destruction of a man than of an inferior animal, because we consider it as involving the extinction of a much greater sum of happiness. For the same reason, he who would shudder at the slaughter of a large animal, will see a thousand insects perish without a pang. Our sympathy with the calamities of our fellow-creatures is adjusted to the same proportions; for we feel more powerfully affected with the distress of fallen greatness than with equal or greater distresses sustained by persons of inferior rank; because, having been accustomed to associate with an elevated station the idea of superior happiness, the loss appears the greater, and the wreck more extensive. But the disproportion in importance betwixt man and the meanest insect is not so great as that which subsists betwixt man considered as *mortal* and as *immortal;* that is, betwixt man as he is represented by the system of scepticism, and that of divine revelation: for the enjoyment of the meanest insect bears some proportion, though a very small one, to the present happiness of man; but the happiness of time bears none at all to that of eternity. The sceptical system, therefore, sinks the importance of human existence to an inconceivable degree.

From these principles results the following important inference—that to extinguish human life by the hand of violence must be quite a different thing in the eyes of a sceptic from what it is in those of a Christian. With the sceptic it is nothing more than diverting the course of a little red fluid, called blood; it is merely lessening the number by one of many millions of fugitive contemptible creatures. The Christian sees in the same event an accountable being cut off from a state of probation, and hurried, perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his Judge, to hear that final, that irrevocable sentence, which is to fix him for ever in an unalterable condition of felicity or woe. The former perceives in death nothing but its physical circumstances; the latter is impressed with the magnitude of its moral consequences. It is the moral relation

which man is supposed to bear to a superior power, the awful idea of accountability, the influence which his present dispositions and actions are conceived to have upon his eternal destiny, more than any superiority of intellectual powers abstracted from these considerations, which invest him with such mysterious grandeur, and constitute the firmest guard on the sanctuary of human life. This reasoning, it is true, serves more *immediately* to show how the disbelief of a future state endangers the security of life; but, though this be its *direct* consequence, it extends by analogy much further, since he who has learned to sport with the *lives* of his fellow-creatures will feel but little solicitude for their welfare in any other instance; but, as the greater includes the less, will easily pass from this to all the inferior gradations of barbarity.

As the advantage of the armed over the unarmed is not seen till the moment of attack, so in that tranquil state of society in which law and order maintain their ascendancy, it is not perceived, perhaps not even suspected, to what an alarming degree the principles of modern infidelity leave us naked and defenceless. But let the state be convulsed, let the mounds of regular authority be once overflowed, and the still small voice of law drowned in the tempest of popular fury (events which recent experience shows to be possible), it will then be seen that atheism is a school of ferocity; and that, having taught its disciples to consider mankind as little better than a nest of insects, they will be prepared in the fierce conflicts of party to trample upon them without pity, and extinguish them without remorse.

It was late* before the atheism of Epicurus gained footing at Rome; but its prevalence was soon followed by such scenes of proscription, confiscation, and blood, as were *then* unparalleled in the history of the world; from which the republic, being never able to recover itself, after many unsuccessful struggles, exchanged liberty for repose, by submission to absolute power. Such were the effects of atheism at Rome. An attempt has been recently made to establish a similar system in France, the consequences of which are too well known to render it requisite for me to shock your feelings by a recital.

* "Neque enim assentior iis qui *hæc nuper* disserere cœperunt, cum corporibus simul animos interire atque omnia morte deleri."—*Cicero de Amicitiâ.*

The only doubt that can arise is, whether the barbarities which have stained the revolution in that unhappy country are justly chargeable on the prevalence of atheism. Let those who doubt of this, recollect that the men who, by their activity and talents, prepared the minds of the people for that great change — *Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, *Diderot*, *Rousseau*, and others— were avowed enemies of revelation; that in all their writings the diffusion of scepticism and revolutionary principles went hand in hand; that the fury of the most sanguinary parties was especially pointed against the Christian priesthood and religious institutions, without once pretending, like other persecutors, to execute the vengeance of God (whose name they never mentioned) upon his enemies; that their atrocities were committed with a wanton levity and brutal merriment; that the reign of atheism was avowedly and expressly the reign of terror; that in the full madness of their career, in the highest climax of their horrors, they shut up the temples of God, abolished his worship, and proclaimed death to be an eternal sleep; as if, by pointing to the silence of the sepulchre, and the sleep of the dead, these ferocious barbarians meant to apologize for leaving neither sleep, quiet, nor repose to the living.

As the infidels fabled that Minerva issued full armed from the head of Jupiter, no sooner were the speculations of atheistical philosophy matured, than they gave birth to a ferocity which converted the most polished people in Europe into a horde of assassins; the seat of voluptuous refinement, of pleasure, and of arts, into a theatre of blood.

Having already shown that the principles of infidelity facilitate the commission of crimes, by removing the restraints of fear; and that they foster the arrogance of the individual, while they inculcate the most despicable opinion of the species; the inevitable result is, that a haughty self-confidence, a contempt of mankind, together with a daring defiance of religious restraints, are the natural ingredients of the atheistical character; nor is it less evident that these are, of all others, the dispositions which most forcibly stimulate to violence and cruelty.

Settle it therefore in your minds, as a maxim never to be effaced or forgotten, that atheism is an inhuman, bloody, ferocious system, equally hostile to every useful restraint, and to

every virtuous affection; that leaving nothing above us to excite awe, nor round us to awaken tenderness, it wages war with heaven and earth: its first object is to dethrone God, its next to destroy man.*

There is a third vice, not less destructive to society than either of those which have been already mentioned, to which the system of modern infidelity is favourable; that is, unbridled sensuality, the licentious and unrestrained indulgence of those passions which are essential to the continuation of the species. The magnitude of these passions, and their supreme importance to the existence as well as the peace and welfare of society, have rendered it one of the first objects of solicitude with every wise legislator, to restrain them by such laws, and to confine their indulgence within such limits, as shall best promote the great ends for which they were implanted.

The benevolence and wisdom of the Author of Christianity are eminently conspicuous in the laws he has enacted on this branch of morals; for, while he authorizes marriage, he restrains the vagrancy and caprice of the passions, by forbidding polygamy and divorce; and, well knowing that offences against the laws of chastity usually spring from an ill-regulated imagination, he inculcates purity of heart. Among innumerable benefits which the world has derived from the Christian religion, a superior refinement in the sexual sentiments, a more equal and respectful treatment of women, greater dignity and permanence conferred on the institution of marriage, are not the least considerable; in consequence of which the purest affections, and the most sacred duties, are grafted on the stock of the strongest instincts.

The aim of all the leading champions of infidelity is to rob mankind of these benefits, and throw them back into a state of gross and brutal sensuality. In this spirit, Mr. Hume represents the private conduct of the profligate Charles, whose debaucheries polluted the age, as a just subject of pane-

* As human nature is the same in all ages, it is not surprising to find the same moral systems, even in the most dissimilar circumstances, produce corresponding effects. Josephus remarks that the Sadducees, a kind of Jewish infidels, whose tenets were the denial of a moral government and a future state, were distinguished from the other sects by their ferocity. *De Bell. Jud.*, lib. ii. He elsewhere remarks, that they were eminent for their inhumanity in their judicial capacity

gyric. A disciple in the same school has lately had the unblushing effrontery to stigmatize marriage as the worst of all monopolies; and, in a narrative of his licentious amours, to make a formal apology for departing from his principles, by submitting to its restraints. The popular productions on the Continent, which issue from the atheistical school, are incessantly directed to the same purpose.

Under every possible aspect in which infidelity can be viewed, it extends the dominion of sensuality: it repeals and abrogates every law by which divine revelation has, under such awful sanctions, restrained the indulgence of the passions. The disbelief of a supreme, omniscient Being, which it inculcates, releases its disciples from an attention to the *heart*, from every care but the preservation of outward decorum: and the exclusion of the devout affections, and an unseen world, leaves the mind immersed in visible, sensible objects.

There are two sorts of pleasures, corporeal and mental. Though we are indebted to the senses for all our perceptions *originally*, yet those which are at the farthest remove from their *immediate impressions* confer the most elevation on the character; since, in proportion as they are multiplied and augmented, the slavish subjection to the senses is subdued. Hence the true and only antidote to debasing sensuality is the possession of a fund of that *kind of enjoyment* which is independent of the corporeal appetites. Inferior in the perfection of several of his senses to different parts of the brute creation, the superiority of man over them all consists in his superior power of multiplying by new combinations his mental perceptions, and thereby of creating to himself resources of happiness separate from external sensation. In the scale of enjoyment, at the first remove from sense are the pleasures of reason and society; at the next are the pleasures of devotion and religion. The former, though totally distinct from those of sense, are yet less perfectly adapted to moderate their excesses than the last, as they are in a great measure conversant with visible and sensible objects.—The religious affections and sentiments are, in fact, and were intended to be, the *proper antagonist* of sensuality: the great deliverer from the thraldom of the appetites, by opening a spiritual world, and inspiring hopes and fears, and consolations and joys, which

bear no relation to the material and sensible universe. The criminal indulgence of sensual passions admits but of two modes of prevention; the establishment of such laws and maxims in society as shall render lewd profligacy impracticable or infamous, or the infusion of such principles and habits as shall render it distasteful. Human legislatures have encountered the disease in the first, the truths and sanctions of revealed religion in the last, of these methods: to both of which the advocates of modern infidelity are equally hostile.

So much has been said by many able writers to evince the inconceivable benefit of the marriage institution, that to hear it seriously attacked by men who style themselves philosophers, at the close of the eighteenth century, must awaken indignation and surprise. The object of this discourse leads us to direct our attention particularly to the influence of this institution on the *civilization* of the world.

From the records of revelation we learn that marriage, or the *permanent union* of the sexes, was ordained by God, and existed, under different modifications, in the early infancy of mankind, without which they could never have emerged from barbarism. For, conceive only what eternal discord, jealousy, and violence would ensue, were the objects of the tenderest affections secured to their possessor by no law or tie of moral obligation: were domestic enjoyments disturbed by incessant fear, and licentiousness inflamed by hope. Who could find sufficient tranquillity of mind to enable him to plan or execute any continued scheme of action, or what room for arts, or sciences, or religion, or virtue, in that state in which the chief earthly happiness was exposed to every lawless invader; where one was racked with an incessant anxiety to keep what the other was equally eager to acquire? It is not probable in itself, independent of the light of Scripture, that the benevolent Author of the human race ever placed them in so wretched a condition at first: it is certain they could not remain in it long, without being exterminated. Marriage, by shutting out these evils, and enabling every man to rest secure in his enjoyments, is the great civilizer of the world: with this security the mind is at liberty to expand in generous affections, and has leisure to look abroad, and engage in the pursuits of knowledge, science, and virtue.

Nor is it in this way only that marriage institutions are

essential to the welfare of mankind. They are sources of tenderness, as well as the guardians of peace. Without the permanent union of the sexes, there can be no permanent families: the dissolution of nuptial ties involves the dissolution of domestic society. But domestic society is the seminary of social affections, the cradle of sensibility, where the first elements are acquired of that tenderness and humanity which cement mankind together; and, were they entirely extinguished, the whole fabric of social institutions would be dissolved.

Families are so many centres of attraction, which preserve mankind from being scattered and dissipated by the repulsive powers of selfishness. The order of nature is evermore from particulars to generals. As in the operations of intellect we proceed from the contemplation of individuals to the formation of general abstractions, so in the development of the passions in like manner, we advance from private to public affections; from the love of parents, brothers, and sisters, to those more expanded regards which embrace the immense society of human kind.*

In order to render men benevolent, they must first be made tender: for benevolent affections are not the offspring of reasoning; they result from that culture of the heart, from those early impressions of tenderness, gratitude, and sympathy, which the endearments of domestic life are sure to supply, and for the formation of which it is the best possible school.

The advocates of infidelity invert this eternal order of nature. Instead of inculcating the private affections, as a discipline by which the mind is prepared for those of a more public nature, they set them in direct opposition to each other, they propose to build general benevolence on the destruction of individual tenderness, and to make us love the whole species more by loving every particular part of it less. In pursuit of this chimerical project, gratitude, humility, conjugal, parental, and filial affection, together with every other social disposition,

* "Arctior vero colligatio est societatis propinquorum: ab illa enim immensa societate humani generis, in exiguum angustumque concluditur. Nam cum sit hoc natura commune animantium, ut habeant lubidinem procreandi, prima societas in ipso conjugio est; proxima in liberis; deinde una domus, communia omnia. Id autem est principium urbis, et quasi seminarium reipublicæ."—*Cic. de Off.* lib. i. cap. 17.

are reprobated—virtue is limited to a passionate attachment to the general good. Is it not natural to ask, when all the tenderness of life is extinguished, and all the bands of society are untwisted, from whence this ardent affection for the general good is to spring?

When this savage philosophy has completed its work, when it has taught its disciple to look with perfect indifference on the offspring of his body, and the wife of his bosom, to estrange himself from his friends, insult his benefactors, and silence the pleadings of gratitude and pity; will he, by thus divesting himself of all that is human, be better prepared for the disinterested love of his species? Will he become a philanthropist only because he has ceased to be a man? Rather, in this total exemption from all the feelings which humanize and soften, in this chilling frost of universal indifference, may we not be certain that selfishness, unmingled and uncontrolled, will assume the empire of his heart; and that, under pretence of advancing the general good, an object to which the fancy may give innumerable shapes, he will be prepared for the violation of every duty, and the perpetration of every crime? Extended benevolence is the last and most perfect fruit of the private affections; so that to expect to reap the former from the extinction of the latter, is to oppose the means to the end; is as absurd as to attempt to reach the summit of the highest mountain without passing through the intermediate spaces, or to hope to attain the heights of science by forgetting the first elements of knowledge. These absurdities have sprung, however, in the advocates of infidelity, from an ignorance of human nature, sufficient to disgrace even those who did not style themselves philosophers. Presuming, contrary to the experience of every moment, that the affections are awakened by *reasoning*, and perceiving that the general good is an incomparably greater object *in itself* than the happiness of any limited number of individuals, they inferred nothing more was necessary than to exhibit it in its just dimensions, to draw the *affections* towards it; as though the fact of the superior populousness of China to Great Britain needed but to be known to render us indifferent to our domestic concerns, and lead us to direct all our anxiety to the prosperity of that vast but remote empire.

It is not the province of reason to awaken new passions, or

open new sources of sensibility; but to direct us in the attainment of those objects which nature has already rendered pleasing, or to determine, among the interfering inclinations and passions which sway the mind, which are the fittest to be preferred.

Is a regard to the general good, then, you will reply, to be excluded from the motives of action? Nothing is more remote from my intention: but as the nature of this motive has, in my opinion, been much misunderstood by some good men, and abused by others of a different description, to the worst of purposes, permit me to declare, in a few words, what appears to me to be the truth on this subject.

The welfare of the whole system of being must be allowed to be, in itself, the object of all others the most worthy of being pursued; so that, could the mind distinctly embrace it, and discern at every step *what action* would infallibly promote it, we should be furnished with a sure criterion of right and wrong, an unerring guide, which would supersede the use and necessity of all inferior rules, laws, and principles.

But this being impossible, since the good of the *whole* is a motive so loose and indeterminate, and embraces such an infinity of relations, that before we could be certain what action it prescribed, the season of action would be past; to weak, short-sighted mortals Providence has assigned a sphere of agency, less grand and extensive indeed, but better suited to their limited powers, by implanting certain *affections* which it is their duty to cultivate, and suggesting particular rules to which they are bound to conform. By these provisions the boundaries of virtue are easily ascertained, at the same time that its ultimate object, the good of the whole, is secured; for, since the happiness of the entire system results from the happiness of the several parts, the affections, which confine the attention *immediately* to the latter, conspire in the end to the promotion of the former; as the labourer, whose industry is limited to a corner of a large building, performs his part towards rearing the structure much more effectually than if he extended his care to the whole.

As the interest, however, of any limited number of persons may not only not contribute, but may possibly be directly opposed to the general good (the interest of a family, for example, to that of a province, or of a nation to that of the

world), Providence has so ordered it, that in a well-regulated mind there springs up, as we have already seen, besides particular attachments, *an extended regard to the species*, whose office is twofold: not to *destroy* and *extinguish* the more private affections, which is mental parricide; but first, as far as is consistent with the claims of those who are immediately committed to our care, *to do good to all men*; secondly, to exercise a jurisdiction and control over the private affections, so as to prohibit their indulgence whenever it would be attended with *manifest detriment* to the whole. Thus every part of our nature is brought into action; all the practical principles of the human heart find an element to move in, each in its different sort and manner conspiring, without mutual collisions, to maintain the harmony of the world and the happiness of the universe.*

* It is somewhat singular, that many of the fashionable infidels have hit upon a definition of virtue which perfectly coincides with that of certain metaphysical divines in America, first invented and defended by that most acute reasoner, JONATHAN EDWARDS. They both place virtue exclusively in a passion for the general good; or, as Mr. Edwards expresses it, *love to being in general*; so that our love is always to be proportioned to the magnitude of its object in the scale of being: which is liable to the objections I have already stated, as well as to many others which the limits of this note will not permit me to enumerate. Let it suffice to remark, (1.) That virtue, on these principles, is an utter impossibility: for the system of being, comprehending the great Supreme, is *infinite*,—and, therefore, to maintain the proper proportion, the force of particular attachment must be infinitely less than the passion for the general good; but the limits of the human mind are not capable of any emotion so infinitely different *in degree*. (2.) Since *our views* of the extent of the universe are capable of perpetual enlargement, admitting the sum of existence is ever the same, we must return back at each step to diminish the strength of particular affections, or they will become disproportionate; and consequently, on these principles, vicious; so that the balance must be continually fluctuating, by the weights being taken out of one scale and put into the other. (3.) If virtue consists *exclusively* in love to being in general, or attachment to the general good, the particular affections are, to every purpose of virtue, useless, and even pernicious; for their immediate, nay, their necessary tendency is to attract to their objects a proportion of attention which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale. To allege that the *general good* is promoted by them, will be of no advantage to the defence of this system, but the contrary, by confessing that a greater sum of happiness is attained by a deviation from, than an adherence to, its principles; unless its advocates mean by the love of being in general the same thing as the private affections, which is to confound all the distinctions of language, as well as all the

Before I close this discourse, I cannot omit to mention three circumstances attending the propagation of infidelity by its present abettors, equally new and alarming.

1. It is the first attempt which has been ever witnessed, on an extensive scale, to establish *the principles of atheism;* the first effort which history has recorded to disannul and extinguish the belief of all superior powers; the consequence of which, should it succeed, would be to place mankind in a situation never before experienced, not even during the ages of pagan darkness. The system of polytheism was as remote from modern infidelity as from true religion. Amidst that rubbish of superstition, the product of fear, ignorance, and vice, which had been accumulating for ages, some faint embers of sacred truth remained unextinguished; the interposition of unseen powers in the affairs of men was believed and revered, the sanctity of oaths was maintained, the idea of *revelation* and of *tradition*, as a source of religious knowledge, was familiar; a useful persuasion of the existence of a future world was kept alive, and the greater gods were looked up to

operations of mind. Let it be remembered, we have no dispute respecting what is the ultimate end of virtue, which is allowed on both sides to be the greatest sum of happiness in the universe. The question is merely what is *virtue itself:* or, in other words, what are the means appointed for the attainment of that end?

There is little doubt, from some parts of Mr. Godwin's work, entitled, 'Political Justice,' as well as from his early habits of reading, that he was indebted to Mr. Edwards for his principal arguments against the private affections; though, with a daring consistency, he has pursued his principles to an extreme from which that most excellent man would have revolted with horror. The fundamental error of the whole system arose, as I conceive, from a mistaken pursuit of simplicity: from a wish to construct a moral system, without leaving sufficient scope for the infinite variety of moral phenomena and mental combination; in consequence of which its advocates were induced to place virtue *exclusively* in some *one disposition* of mind: and since the passion for the general good is undeniably the *noblest* and most extensive of all others, when it was once resolved to place virtue in any *one thing*, there remained little room to hesitate which should be preferred. It might have been worth while to reflect, that in the natural world there are two kinds of attraction; one, which holds the several *parts* of individual bodies in contact; another, which maintains the union of bodies themselves with the general system: and that, though the union in the former case is more *intimate* than in the latter, each is equally essential to the order of the world. Similar to this is the relation which the public and private affections bear to each other, and their use in the moral system.

as the guardians of the public welfare, the patrons of those virtues which promote the prosperity of states, and the avengers of injustice, perfidy, and fraud.*

* The testimony of Polybius to the beneficial effects which resulted from the system of pagan superstition, in fortifying the sentiments of moral obligation, and supporting the sanctity of oaths, is so weighty and decisive, that it would be an injustice to the subject not to insert it; more especially as it is impossible to attribute it to the influence of credulity on the author himself, who was evidently a sceptic. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that all the benefits which might in any way flow from superstition, are secured to an incomparably greater degree by the belief of true religion.

"But among all the useful institutions (says Polybius) that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable, perhaps, is the opinion which people are taught to hold concerning the gods: and that which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears, in my judgment, to be the very thing by which this republic is chiefly sustained. I mean superstition, which is impressed with all its terrors, and influences the private actions of the citizens and the public administration of the state, to a degree that can scarcely be exceeded.

"The ancients, therefore, acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much rather *are those of the present age to be charged with rashness and absurdity*, in endeavouring to extirpate these opinions; for, not to mention other effects that flow from such an institution, if among the Greeks, for example, a single talent only be intrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money, though they give ten written sureties, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, they are unable to discharge the trust reposed in them with integrity. But the Romans, on the other hand, who in the course of their magistracies and in embassies disburse the greatest sums, are prevailed on, by the single obligation of an oath, to perform their duty with inviolable honesty. And, as in other states, a man is rarely to be found whose hands are pure from public robbery, so among the Romans it is no less rare to discover one that is tainted with this crime."—*Hampton's Polybius*, vol. iii. book vi.

Though the system of paganism is justly condemned by reason and Scripture, yet it assumed as true several principles of the first importance to the preservation of public manners; such as a persuasion of invisible power, of the folly of incurring the divine vengeance for the attainment of any present advantage, and the divine approbation of virtue; so that, strictly speaking, it was the mixture of truth in it which gave it all its utility, which is well stated by the *great and judicious* Hooker in treating on this subject. "Seeing, therefore, it doth thus appear (says that venerable author), that the safety of all states dependeth upon religion; that religion, unfeignedly loved, perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth; that men's desire is, in general, to hold no religion but the true; and that whatever good effects do grow out of their religion who embrace, instead of the true, a false, the roots

Of whatever benefit superstition might formerly be productive, by the scattered particles of truth which it contained, these advantages can now only be reaped from the soil of true religion; nor is there any other alternative left than the belief of Christianity, or absolute atheism. In the revolutions of the human mind, exploded *opinions* are often revived; but an exploded superstition never recovers its credit. The pretension to divine revelation is so august and commanding, that when its falsehood is once discerned, it is covered with all the ignominy of detected imposture; it falls from such a height (to change the figure), that it is inevitably crumbled into atoms. Religions, whether false or true, are not creatures of arbitrary institution. After discrediting the principles of piety, should our modern free-thinkers find it necessary, in order to restrain the excesses of ferocity, to seek for a substitute in some popular superstition, it will prove a vain and impracticable attempt: they may recall the names, restore the altars, and revive the ceremonies; but to rekindle the spirit of heathenism will exceed their power; because it is impossible to enact ignorance by law, or to repeal by legislative authority the dictates of reason and the light of science.

2. The efforts of infidels to diffuse the principles of infidelity among the common people, is another alarming symptom peculiar to the present time. HUME, BOLINGBROKE, and GIBBON, addressed themselves solely to the more polished classes of the community, and would have thought their refined speculations debased by an attempt to enlist disciples from among the populace. Infidelity has lately grown condescending; bred in the speculations of a daring philosophy, immured at first in the cloisters of the learned, and afterwards nursed in the lap of voluptuousness and of courts; having at length reached its full maturity, it boldly ventures to challenge the suffrages of the people, solicits the acquaintance of peasants and mechanics, and seeks to draw whole nations to its standard.

It is not difficult to account for this new state of things.

thereof are certain sparks of the light of truth intermingled with the darkness of error; because no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths, we have reason to think that all true virtues are to honour *true religion* as their parent, and all well ordered commonweals to love her as their chiefest stay."—*Eccles. Pol.*, book v.

While infidelity was rare, it was employed as the instrument of literary vanity; its wide diffusion having disqualified it for answering that purpose, it is now adopted as the organ of political convulsion. Literary distinction is conferred by the approbation of a few; but the total subversion and overthrow of society demand the concurrence of millions.

3. The infidels of the present day are the first sophists who have presumed to innovate in the very *substance* of morals. The disputes on moral questions, hitherto agitated amongst philosophers, have respected the *grounds* of duty, not the *nature of duty itself*; or they have been merely metaphysical, and related to the *history* of moral sentiments in the mind, the sources and principles from which they were most easily deduced; they never turned on the quality of those dispositions and actions which were to be denominated virtuous. In the firm persuasion that the love and fear of the Supreme Being, the sacred observation of promises and oaths, reverence to magistrates, obedience to parents, gratitude to benefactors, conjugal fidelity, and parental tenderness, were primary virtues, and the chief support of every commonwealth, they were unanimous. The curse denounced upon such as remove ancient land-marks, upon those who call good evil, and evil good, put light for darkness, and darkness for light, who employ their faculties to subvert the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, and thus to poison the streams of virtue at their source, falls with accumulated weight on the advocates of modern infidelity, and on them alone.

Permit me to close this discourse with a few serious reflections. There is much, it must be confessed, in the apostacy of multitudes, and the rapid progress of infidelity, to awaken our fears for the virtue of the rising generation; but nothing to shake our faith; nothing which Scripture itself does not give us room to expect. The features which compose the character of apostates, their profaneness, presumption, lewdness, impatience of subordination, restless appetite for change, vain pretensions to freedom and to emancipate the world, while themselves are the slaves of lust, the weapons with which they attack Christianity, and the snares they spread for the unwary, are depicted in the clearest colours by the pencil of prophecy: *Knowing this first* (says Peter), *that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own*

*lusts.** In the same epistle he more fully describes the persons he alludes to; *as chiefly them which walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities; sporting themselves in their own deceivings, having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error; while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.*† Of the same characters Jude admonishes us *to remember that they were foretold as mockers, who should be in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they* (he adds) *who separate themselves* (by apostasy), *sensual, not having the Spirit.* Infidelity is an evil of short duration. "*It has* (as a judicious writer observes) *no individual subsistence given it in the system of prophecy. It is not a* BEAST; *but a mere putrid excrescence of the papal beast: an excrescence which, though it may diffuse death through every vein of the body on which it grew, yet shall die along with it.*" ‡ Its enormities will hasten its overthrow. It is impossible that a system which, by vilifying every virtue, and embracing the patronage of almost every vice and crime, wages war with all the order and civilization of the world; which, equal to the establishment of nothing, is armed only with the energies of destruction; can long retain an ascendancy. It is in no shape formed for perpetuity. Sudden in its rise, and impetuous in its progress, it resembles a mountain torrent, which is loud, filthy, and desolating; but, being fed by no perennial spring, is soon drained off, and disappears. By permitting to a certain extent the prevalence of infidelity, Providence is preparing new triumphs for religion. In asserting its authority, the preachers of the Gospel have hitherto found it necessary to weigh the prospects of immortality against the interests of time; to strip the world of its charms, to insist on the deceitfulness of plea-

* 2 Pet. iii. 3. † 2 Pet. ii. 10, &c.

‡ See an excellent work, by the Rev. Andrew Fuller, entitled 'The Gospel its own Witness.' This valuable piece is reprinted in vol. i. of the uniform edition of Mr. Fuller's works, now publishing by his son, Mr. A. G. Fuller.—ED.

sure, the unsatisfying nature of riches, the emptiness of grandeur, and the nothingness of a mere worldly life. Topics of this nature will always have their use; but it is not by such representations alone that the importance of religion is evinced. The prevalence of impiety has armed us with new weapons in its defence.

Religion being primarily intended to make men *wise unto salvation*, the support it ministers to social order, the stability it confers on government and laws, is a *subordinate species* of advantage which we should have continued to enjoy, without reflecting on its cause, but for the development of deistical principles, and the experiment which has been made of their effects in a neighbouring country. It had been the constant boast of infidels, that their system, more liberal and generous than Christianity, needed but to be tried to produce an immense accession of human happiness; and Christian nations, careless and supine, retaining little of religion but the profession, and disgusted with its restraints, lent a favourable ear to these pretensions. God permitted the trial to be made. In one country, and that the centre of Christendom, revelation underwent a total eclipse,* while atheism, performing on a darkened theatre its strange and fearful tragedy, confounded the first elements of society, blended every age, rank, and sex in indiscriminate proscription and massacre, and convulsed all Europe to its centre; that the imperishable memorial of these events might teach the last generations of mankind to consider religion as the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order, which alone has power to curb the fury of the passions, and secure to every one his rights; to the laborious the reward of their industry, to the rich the enjoyment of their wealth, to nobles the preservation of their honours, and to princes the stability of their thrones.

We might ask the patrons of infidelity what fury impels them to attempt the subversion of Christianity? Is it that they have discovered a better system? To what virtues are their principles favourable? Or is there one which Christians

* It is worthy of attention that Mercier, a warm advocate of the French Revolution, and a professed deist, in his recent work, entitled 'New Paris,' acknowledges and laments the extinction of religion in France. "*We have*," says he, "*in proscribing superstition, destroyed all religious sentiment; but this is not the way to regenerate the world.*" See Appendix to the thirtieth vol. of the 'Monthly Review.'

have not carried to a higher perfection than any of which their party can boast? Have they discovered a more excellent rule of life, or a better hope in death, than that which the Scriptures suggest? Above all, what are the pretensions on which they rest their claims to be the guides of mankind; or which embolden them to expect we should trample upon the experience of ages, and abandon a religion which has been attested by a train of miracles and prophecies, in which millions of our forefathers have found a refuge in every trouble, and consolation in the hour of death: a religion which has been adorned with the highest sanctity of character and splendor of talents, which enrols amongst its disciples the names of BACON, NEWTON, and LOCKE, the glory of their species, and to which these illustrious men were proud to dedicate the last and best fruits of their immortal genius?

If the question at issue is to be decided by argument, nothing can be added to the triumph of Christianity; if by an appeal to authority, what have our adversaries to oppose to these great names? Where are the infidels of such pure, uncontaminated morals, unshaken probity, and extended benevolence, that we should be in danger of being seduced into impiety by their example? Into what obscure recesses of misery, into what dungeons, have their philanthropists penetrated, to lighten the fetters and relieve the sorrows of the helpless captive? What barbarous tribes have their apostles visited: what distant climes have *they* explored, encompassed with cold, nakedness, and want, to diffuse principles of virtue, and the blessings of civilization? Or will they rather choose to waive their pretensions to this extraordinary, and, in their eyes, eccentric species of benevolence (for infidels, we know, are sworn enemies to enthusiasm of every sort), and rest their character on their political exploits; on their efforts to reanimate the virtue of a sinking state, to restrain licentiousness, to calm the tumult of popular fury; and, by inculcating the spirit of justice, moderation, and pity for fallen greatness, to mitigate the inevitable horrors of revolution? our adversaries will at least have the discretion, if not the modesty, to recede from the test.

More than all, their infatuated eagerness, their parricidal zeal to extinguish a sense of Deity, must excite astonishment and horror. Is the idea of an almighty and perfect Ruler

unfriendly to any passion which is consistent with innocence, or an obstruction to any design which it is not shameful to avow? Eternal God, on what are thine enemies intent! What are those enterprises of guilt and horror, that, for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of heaven must not pierce! Miserable men! Proud of being the offspring of chance; in love with universal disorder; whose happiness is involved in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world!

Having been led by the nature of the subject to consider chiefly the manner in which sceptical impiety affects the welfare of states, it is the more requisite to warn you against that most fatal mistake of regarding religion as an engine of policy; and to recall to your recollection that the concern we have in it is much more as *individuals* than as *collective bodies*, and far less temporal than eternal. The happiness which it confers in the present life comprehends the blessings which it scatters by the way in its march to immortality. That future condition of being which it ascertains, and for which its promises and truths are meant to prepare us, is the ultimate end of human societies, the final scope and object of present existence, in comparison of which all the revolutions of nations, and all the vicissitudes of time, are light and transitory. *Godliness has*, it is true, *the promise of the life that now is;* but chiefly *of that which is to come.* Other acquisitions may be requisite to make men great; but, be assured, the religion of Jesus is alone sufficient to make them good and happy. Powerful sources of consolation in sorrow, unshaken fortitude amidst the changes and perturbations of the world, humility remote from meanness, and dignity unstained by pride, contentment in every station, passions pure and calm, with habitual serenity, the full enjoyment of life, undisturbed by the dread of dissolution or the fear of an hereafter, are its invaluable gifts. To these enjoyments, however, you will necessarily continue strangers, unless you resign yourselves wholly to its power; for the consolations of religion are reserved to reward, to sweeten, and to stimulate obedience. Many, without renouncing the profession of Christianity, without formally rejecting its distinguishing

doctrines, live in such an habitual violation of its laws, and contradiction to its spirit, that, conscious they have more to fear than to hope from its truth, they are never able to contemplate it without terror. It haunts their imagination, instead of tranquillizing their hearts, and hangs with depressing weight on all their enjoyments and pursuits. Their religion, instead of comforting them under their troubles, is itself their greatest trouble, from which they seek refuge in the dissipation and vanity of the world, until the throbs and tumults of conscience force them back upon religion. Thus suspended betwixt opposite powers, the sport of contradictory influences, they are disqualified for the happiness of both worlds; and neither enjoy the pleasures of sin, nor the peace of piety. Is it surprising to find a mind thus bewildered in uncertainty, and dissatisfied with itself, courting deception, and embracing with eagerness every pretext to mutilate the claims and enervate the authority of Christianity: forgetting that it is of the very essence of the religious principle to preside and control, and that it is impossible to *serve God and mammon?* It is this class of professors who are chiefly in danger of being entangled in the snares of infidelity.

The champions of infidelity have much more reason to be ashamed than to boast of such converts. For what can be a stronger presumption of the falsehood of a system, than that it is the opiate of a restless conscience; that it prevails with minds of a certain description, not because they find it true, but because they feel it necessary; and that in adopting it they consult less with their reason than with their vices and their fears? It requires but little sagacity to foresee that speculations which originate in guilt must end in ruin. Infidels are not themselves satisfied with the truth of their system: for had they any settled assurance of its principles, in consequence of calm dispassionate investigation, they would never disturb the quiet of the world by their attempts to proselyte; but would lament their own infelicity, in not being able to perceive sufficient evidence for the truth of religion, which furnishes such incentives to virtue, and inspires such exalted hopes. Having nothing to substitute in the place of religion, it is absurd to suppose that, in opposition to the collective voice of every country, age, and time, proclaiming its necessity, solicitude for the welfare of mankind impels them to destroy it.

To very different motives must their conduct be imputed. More like conspirators than philosophers, in spite of the darkness with which they endeavour to surround themselves, some rays of unwelcome conviction will penetrate, some secret apprehensions that all is not right will make themselves felt, which they find nothing so effectual to quell as an attempt to enlist fresh disciples, who, in exchange for new principles, impart confidence and diminish fear. For the same reason it is seldom they attack Christianity by argument: their favourite weapons are ridicule, obscenity, and blasphemy; as the most miserable outcasts of society are, of all men, found most to delight in vulgar merriment and senseless riot.

Jesus Christ seems to have *his fan in his hand to be thoroughly purging his floor*; and nominal Christians will probably be scattered like chaff. But has *real* Christianity anything to fear? Have not the degenerate manners and corrupt lives of multitudes in the visible church been, on the contrary, the principal occasion of scandal and offence? Infidelity, without intending it, is gradually removing this reproach: possessing the property of attracting to itself the morbid humours which pervade the church, until the Christian profession, on the one hand, is reduced to a sound and healthy state, and scepticism, on the other, exhibits nothing but a mass of putridity and disease.

In a view of the final issue of the contest, we should find little cause to lament the astonishing prevalence of infidelity, but for a solicitude for the rising generation, to whom its principles are recommended by two motives, with young minds the most persuasive; the love of independence, and the love of pleasure. With respect to the first, we would earnestly entreat the young to remember that, by the unanimous consent of all ages, modesty, docility, and reverence to superior years, and to parents above all, have been considered as their *appropriate virtues*, a guard assigned by the immutable laws of God and nature on the inexperience of youth; and with respect to the second, that Christianity prohibits no pleasures that are innocent, lays no restraints that are capricious; but that the sobriety and purity which it enjoins, by strengthening the intellectual powers, and preserving the faculties of mind and body in undiminished vigour, lay *the surest* foundation

of present peace and future eminence. At such a season as this, it becomes an urgent duty on parents, guardians, and tutors, to watch, not only over the morals, but the principles of those committed to their care; to make it appear that a concern for their eternal welfare is their chief concern; and to imbue them early with that knowledge of the evidences of Christianity, and that profound reverence for the Scriptures, that, with the blessing of God (which, with submission, they may then expect), *may keep them from this hour of temptation that has come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth.*

To an attentive observer of the signs of the times, it will appear one of the most extraordinary phenomena of this eventful crisis, that, amidst the ravages of atheism and infidelity, real religion is evidently on the increase. *The kingdom of God*, we know, *cometh not with observation;* but still there are not wanting manifest tokens of its approach. The personal appearance of the Son of God was announced by the shaking of nations; his spiritual kingdom, in all probability, will be established in the midst of similar convulsions and disorders. The blasphemous impiety of the enemies of God, as well as the zealous efforts of his sincere worshippers, will doubtless be overruled to accomplish the purposes of his unerring providence: while, in inflicting the chastisements of offended Deity on corrupt communities and nations, infidelity marks its progress by devastation and ruin, by the prostration of thrones and concussions of kingdoms; thus appalling the inhabitants of the world, and compelling them to take refuge in the church of God, the true sanctuary; the stream of divine knowledge, unobserved, is flowing in new channels, winding its course among humble valleys, refreshing thirsty deserts, and enriching with far other and higher blessings than those of commerce, the most distant climes and nations, until, agreeably to the prediction of prophecy, the *knowledge of the Lord shall fill and cover the whole earth.*

Within the limits of this discourse it would be impracticable to exhibit the evidences of Christianity; nor is it my design; but there is one consideration, resulting immediately from my text, which is entitled to great weight with all who believe in the one living and true God as the sole object of worship. The Ephesians, in common with

other Gentiles, are described in the text as being, previous to their conversion, *without God in the world;* that is, without any just and solid acquaintance with his character, destitute of the knowledge of his will, the institutes of his worship, and the hopes of his favour; to the truth of which representation whoever possesses the slightest acquaintance with pagan antiquity must assent. Nor is it a fact less incontestable, that, while human philosophy was never able to abolish idolatry in a single village, the promulgation of the Gospel overthrew it in a great part (and that the most enlightened) of the world. If our belief in the unity and perfections of God, together with his moral government, and exclusive right to the worship of mankind, be founded in truth, they cannot reasonably be denied to be truths of the first importance, and infinitely to outweigh the greatest discoveries in science; because they turn the hopes, fears, and interests of man into a totally different channel from that in which they must otherwise flow. Wherever these principles are first admitted, there a new dominion is erected, and a new system of laws established.

But since all events are under divine direction, is it reasonable to suppose that the great Parent, after suffering his creatures to continue for ages ignorant of his true character, should at length, in the course of his providence, fix upon falsehood, and that alone, as the effectual method of making himself known; and that what the virtuous exercise of reason in the best and wisest men was never permitted to accomplish, he should confer on fraud and delusion the honour of effecting? It ill comports with the majesty of truth, or the character of God, to believe that he has built the noblest superstructure on the weakest foundation; or reduced mankind to the miserable alternative either of remaining destitute of the knowledge of himself, or of deriving it from the polluted source of impious imposture. We therefore feel ourselves justified on this occasion, in adopting the triumphant boast of the great apostle: *Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

NOTE TO PAGE 277.

The fury of the most sanguinary parties was especially pointed against the Christian Priesthood, &c.—The author finds he has given great offence to some friends whom he highly esteems, by applying the term *Christian Priesthood* to the popish clergy. He begs leave to make a remark or wo by way of apology.

1. It is admitted by all candid Protestants that salvation is attainable in the Roman Catholic church; but he should be glad to be informed what part of the Christian covenant entitles us to expect the salvation of those (where the Gospel is promulgated) who are not even a branch of the visible church of Christ. The papistical tenets are either *fundamentally* erroneous, on which supposition it is certain no papist can be saved; or their errors must be consistent with Christian faith, and consequently, cannot be a valid reason for excluding those who maintain them from being a part (a most corrupt part, if you please, but still a part) of the Christian church.

2. The popish clergy were persecuted under the *character of Christians*, not under the notion of heretics and schismatics. They who were the subjects of persecution were certainly the best judges of its aim and direction; and when the Archbishop of Paris and others endeavoured to screen themselves from its effects by a recantation, what did they recant? Was it popery? No; but the profession of Christianity. These apostates, doubtless, meant to remove the ground of offence, which, in their opinion, was the Christian profession. If the soundest ecclesiastical historians have not refused the honours of martyrdom to such as suffered in the cause of truth amongst the Gnostics, it ill becomes the liberality of the present age to contemplate, with sullen indifference, or malicious joy, the sufferings of conscientious Catholics.

3. At the period to which the author refers, Christian worship of *every kind* was prohibited; while, in solemn mockery of religion, adoration was paid to a strumpet, under the title of the Goddess of Reason. Is it necessary to prove that men who were thus abandoned must be hostile to true religion under every form? Or, if there be any gradations in their abhorrence, to that most which is the most pure and perfect? Are atheism and obscenity more congenial to the Protestant than to the popish profession? To have incurred the hatred of the ruling party of France at the season alluded to, is an honour which the author would be sorry to resign, as the exclusive boast of the church of Rome. To have been the object of the partiality of such bloody and inhuman monsters, would have been a stain upon Protestants which the virtue of ages could not obliterate.

REFLECTIONS ON WAR.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE BAPTIST MEETING, CAMBRIDGE,

ON TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1802,

BEING THE DAY OF THANKSGIVING FOR A GENERAL PEACE.

PREFACE.

The writer is not aware that the sentiments contained in this discourse require apology, though he is convinced he needs the candour of the public with respect to the imperfect manner in which they are exhibited. If it be deemed an impropriety to introduce political reflections in a discourse from the pulpit, he wishes it to be remembered that these are of a general nature, and such as, rising out of the subject and the occasion, he cannot suppose it improper for a Christian minister to impress. With party politics he is determined to have as little to do as possible, and, in the exercise of his professional duties, nothing at all. Conscious that what is here advanced was meant neither to flatter nor offend any party, he is not very solicitous about those misconstructions or misrepresentations to which the purest intentions are exposed. It will probably be objected, that he has dwelt too much on the horrors of war for a Thanksgiving Sermon; in answer to which he begs it may be remembered, that, as the pleasure of rest is relative to fatigue, and that of ease to pain, so the blessing of peace, considered *merely as peace*, is exactly proportioned to the calamity of war. As this, whenever it is justifiable, arises out of a *necessity*, not a desire of acquisition, its natural and proper effect is merely to replace a nation in the state it was in before that necessity was incurred, or, in other words, to recover what was lost, and secure what was endangered. The writer intended to add something more on the moral effects of war (a subject which he should be glad to see undertaken by some superior hand), but found it would not be compatible with the limits he determined to assign himself. The sermon having been preached for the benefit of a Benevolent Society, instituted at Cambridge, will sufficiently account for the observations on charity to the poor, introduced towards the close. The good which has already arisen from the exertions of that society is more than equal to its most sanguine expectations; and should this publication contribute in the smallest degree to the formation of similar ones in other parts, the author will think himself abundantly compensated for the little trouble it has cost him.

Cambridge, *June* 19, 1802.

A SERMON.

PSALM xlvi. 8, 9.

Come, and behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

To the merciful interposition of Providence we owe it that our native land has been exempted for nearly sixty years from being the seat of war; our insular situation having preserved us, under God, from foreign invasion; the admirable balance of our constitution from internal discord. We have heard, indeed, of the ravages of armies, and the depopulation of countries, but they have merely supplied a topic of discourse, and have occasioned no serious alarm. The military system, as far as it has appeared in England, has been seen only on the side of its gaiety and pomp, a pleasing show, without imparting any idea of its horrors; and the rumours of battles and slaughter conveyed from afar have rather amused our leisure than disturbed our repose. While we cannot be too thankful for our security, it has placed us under a disadvantage in one respect, which is, that we have learned to contemplate war with too much indifference, and to feel for the unhappy countries immediately involved in it too little compassion. Had we ever experienced its calamities, we should celebrate the restoration of peace on this occasion with warmer emotions than there is room to apprehend are at present felt. To awaken those sentiments of gratitude which we are this day assembled to express, it will be proper briefly to recall to your attention some of the dreadful effects of hostility. Real war, my brethren, is a very different thing from that painted image of it which you see on a parade or at a review: it is the most awful scourge that Providence employs for the chastisement of man. It is the garment of vengeance with which the Deity arrays himself when he comes forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth. It is *the day of the Lord, cruel both*

with wrath and fierce anger. It is thus described by the sublimest of prophets: *Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty: therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; pangs and sorrows shall take hold on them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flame. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not give her light.*

War may be considered in two views, as it affects the happiness, and as it affects the virtue of mankind; as a source of misery, and as a source of crimes.

1. *Though we must all die,* as the woman of Tekoah said, *and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up;* yet it is impossible for a humane mind to contemplate the rapid extinction of innumerable lives without concern. To perish in a moment, to be hurried instantaneously, without preparation and without warning, into the presence of the Supreme Judge, has something in it inexpressibly awful and affecting. Since the commencement of these hostilities which are now so happily closed, it may be reasonably conjectured that not less than half a million of our fellow-creatures have fallen a sacrifice. Half a million of beings, sharers of the same nature, warmed with the same hopes, and as fondly attached to life as ourselves, have been prematurely swept into the grave; each of whose deaths has pierced the heart of a wife, a parent, a brother, or a sister. How many of these scenes of complicated distress have occurred since the commencement of hostilities, is known only to Omniscience: that they are innumerable cannot admit of a doubt. In some parts of Europe, perhaps, there is scarcely a family exempt.

Though the whole race of man is doomed to dissolution, and we are all hastening to our long home; yet at each successive moment life and death seem to divide betwixt them the dominion of mankind, and life to have the largest share. It is otherwise in war: death reigns there without a rival, and without control. War is the work, the element, or rather

the sport and triumph, of death, who glories not only in the extent of his conquest, but in the richness of his spoil. In the other methods of attack, in the other forms which death assumes, the feeble and the aged, who at the best can live but a short time, are usually the victims; here it is the vigorous and the strong. It is remarked by an ancient historian, that in peace children bury their parents, in war parents bury their children:* nor is the difference small. Children lament their parents, sincerely indeed, but with that moderate and tranquil sorrow which it is natural for those to feel who are conscious of retaining many tender ties, many animating prospects. Parents mourn for their children with the bitterness of despair; the aged parent, the widowed mother, loses, when she is deprived of her children, everything but the capacity of suffering; her heart, withered and desolate, admits no other object, cherishes no other hope. *It is Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.*

But to confine our attention to the number of the slain would give us a very inadequate idea of the ravages of the sword. The lot of those who perish instantaneously may be considered, apart from religious prospects, as comparatively happy, since they are exempt from those lingering diseases and slow torments to which others are liable. We cannot see an individual expire, though a stranger or an enemy, without being sensibly moved, and prompted by compassion to lend him every assistance in our power. Every trace of resentment vanishes in a moment: every other emotion gives way to pity and terror. In these last extremities we remember nothing but the respect and tenderness due to our common nature. What a scene, then, must a field of battle present, where thousands are left without assistance, and without pity, with their wounds exposed to the piercing air, while the blood, freezing as it flows, binds them to the earth, amidst the trampling of horses, and the insults of an enraged foe! If they are spared by the humanity of the enemy, and carried

* In the former editions this sentiment was imputed to Homer; the truth, however, is, as Mr. Hall was afterwards aware, that it was due to his early favourite Herodotus, and occurs in the *Clio*. Ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ (εἰρήνῃ) οἱ παῖδες τοὺς πατέρας θάπτουσι· ἐν δὲ τῷ (πολέμῳ) οἱ πατέρες τοὺς παῖδας. Cap. 87.—Ed.

from the field, it is but a prolongation of torment. Conveyed in uneasy vehicles, often to a remote distance, through roads almost impassable, they are lodged in ill-prepared receptacles for the wounded and the sick, where the variety of distress baffles all the efforts of humanity and skill, and renders it impossible to give to each the attention he demands. Far from their native home, no tender assiduities of friendship, no well-known voice, no wife, or mother, or sister, is near to soothe their sorrows, relieve their thirst, or close their eyes in death. Unhappy man! and must you be swept into the grave unnoticed and unnumbered, and no friendly tear be shed for your sufferings, or mingled with your dust?

We must remember, however, that as a very small proportion of a military life is spent in actual combat, so it is a very small part of its miseries which must be ascribed to this source. More are consumed by the rust of inactivity than by the edge of the sword; confined to a scanty or unwholesome diet, exposed in sickly climates, harassed with tiresome marches and perpetual alarms, their life is a continual scene of hardships and dangers. They grow familiar with hunger, cold, and watchfulness. Crowded into hospitals and prisons, contagion spreads among their ranks, till the ravages of disease exceed those of the enemy.

We have hitherto only adverted to the sufferings of those who are engaged in the profession of arms, without taking into our account the situation of the countries which are the scene of hostilities. How dreadful to hold everything at the mercy of an enemy, and to receive life itself as a boon dependent on the sword. How boundless the fears which such a situation must inspire, where the issues of life and death are determined by no known laws, principles, or customs, and no conception can be formed of our destiny, except as far as it is dimly deciphered in characters of blood, in the dictates of revenge, and the caprices of power. Conceive but for a moment the consternation which the approach of an invading army would impress on the peaceful villages in this neighbourhood. When you have placed yourselves for an instant in that situation, you will learn to sympathize with those unhappy countries which have sustained the ravages of arms. But how is it possible to give you an idea of these horrors? Here you behold rich harvests, the bounty of heaven and the

reward of industry, consumed in a moment, or trampled under foot, while famine and pestilence follow the steps of desolation. There the cottages of peasants given up to the flames, mothers expiring through fear, not for themselves but their infants; the inhabitants flying with their helpless babes in all directions, miserable fugitives on their native soil! In another part you witness opulent cities taken by storm; the streets, where no sounds were heard but those of peaceful industry, filled on a sudden with slaughter and blood, resounding with the cries of the pursuing and the pursued; the palaces of nobles demolished, the houses of the rich pillaged, the chastity of virgins and of matrons violated, and every age, sex, and rank, mingled in promiscuous massacre and ruin.

If we consider the maxims of war which prevailed in the ancient world, and which still prevail in many barbarous nations, we perceive that those who survived the fury of battle and the insolence of victory, were only reserved for more durable calamities; swept into hopeless captivity, exposed in markets, or plunged in mines, with the melancholy distinction bestowed on princes and warriors, after appearing in the triumphal procession of the conqueror, of being conducted to instant death. The contemplation of such scenes as these forces on us this awful reflection, that neither the fury of wild beasts, the concussions of the earth, nor the violence of tempests, are to be compared to the ravages of arms: and that nature in her utmost extent, or, more properly, divine justice in its utmost severity, has supplied no enemy to man so terrible as man.

Still, however, it would be happy for mankind if the effects of national hostility terminated here; but the fact is, that they who are farthest removed from its immediate desolations share largely in the calamity. They are drained of the most precious part of their population, their youth, to repair the waste made by the sword. They are drained of their wealth, by the prodigious expense incurred in the equipment of fleets, and the subsistence of armies in remote parts. The accumulation of debt and taxes diminishes the public strength, and depresses private industry. An augmentation in the price of the necessaries of life, inconvenient to all classes, falls with peculiar weight on the labouring poor, who must carry their industry to market every day, and therefore cannot wait for that ad-

vance of price which gradually attaches to every other article. Of all people, the poor are, on this account, the greatest sufferers by war, and have the most reason to rejoice in the restoration of peace. As it is the farthest from my purpose to awaken unpleasing reflections, or to taint the pure satisfaction of this day by the smallest infusion of political acrimony, it will not be expected I should apply these remarks to the peculiar circumstances of this country, though it would be unpardonable in us to forget (for to forget our dangers is to forget our mercies) how nearly we have been reduced to famine, principally, it is true, through a failure in the crops, but greatly aggravated, no doubt, in its pressure, by our being engaged in a war of unexampled expenditure and extent.

In commercial states (of which Europe principally consists), whatever interrupts their intercourse is a fatal blow to national prosperity. Such states having a mutual dependence on each other, the effects of their hostility extend far beyond the parties engaged in the contest. If there be a country highly commercial, which has a decided superiority in wealth and industry, together with a fleet which enables it to protect its trade, the commerce of such a country may survive the shock, but it is at the expense of the commerce of all other nations; a painful reflection to a generous mind. Even there, the usual channels of trade being closed, it is some time before it can force a new passage for itself: previous to which, an almost total stagnation takes place, by which multitudes are impoverished, and thousands of the industrious poor, being thrown out of employment, are plunged into wretchedness and beggary. Who can calculate the number of industrious families in different parts of the world, to say nothing of our own country, who have been reduced to poverty, from this cause, since the peace of Europe was interrupted?

The plague of a widely extended war possesses, in fact, a sort of omnipresence, by which it makes itself every where felt; for while it gives up myriads to slaughter in one part of the globe, it is busily employed in scattering over countries exempt from its immediate desolations the seeds of famine, pestilence, and death.

If statesmen, if Christian statesmen at least, had a proper feeling on this subject, and would open their hearts to the reflections which such scenes must inspire, instead of rushing

eagerly to arms from the thirst of conquest, or the thirst of gain, would they not hesitate long, would they not try every expedient, every lenient art consistent with national honour, before they ventured on this desperate remedy, or rather, before they plunged into this gulf of horror?

It is time to proceed to another view of the subject, which is, the influence of national warfare on the morals of mankind: a topic on which I must be very brief, but which it would be wrong to omit, as it supplies an additional reason to every good man for the love of peace.

The contests of nations are both the offspring and the parent of injustice. The word of God ascribes the existence of war to the disorderly passions of men. *Whence come wars and fighting among you?* saith the apostle James; *come they not from your lusts, that war in your members?* It is certain two nations cannot engage in hostilities, but one party must be guilty of injustice; and if the magnitude of crimes is to be estimated by a regard to their consequences, it is difficult to conceive an action of equal guilt with the wanton violation of peace. Though something must generally be allowed for the complexness and intricacy of national claims, and the consequent liability to deception, yet where the guilt of an unjust war is clear and manifest, it sinks every other crime into insignificance. If the existence of war always *implies* injustice in one at least of the parties concerned, it is also the fruitful parent of crimes. It reverses, with respect to its objects, all the rules of morality. It is nothing less than a temporary repeal of the principles of virtue. It is a system out of which almost all the virtues are excluded, and in which nearly all the vices are incorporated. Whatever renders human nature amiable or respectable, whatever engages love or confidence, is sacrificed at its shrine. In instructing us to consider a portion of our fellow-creatures as the proper objects of enmity, it removes, as far as they are concerned, the basis of all society, of all civilization and virtue; for the basis of these is the good-will due to every individual of the species, as being a part of ourselves. From this principle all the rules of social virtue emanate. Justice and humanity in their utmost extent are nothing more than the practical application of this great law. The sword, and that alone, cuts asunder the bond of consanguinity which unites man to man. As it

immediately aims at the extinction of life, it is next to impossible, upon the principle that every thing may be lawfully done to him whom we have a right to kill, to set limits to military licence; for, when men pass from the dominion of reason to that of force, whatever restraints are attempted to be laid on the passions will be feeble and fluctuating. Though we must applaud, therefore, the attempts of the humane Grotius, to blend maxims of humanity with military operations, it is to be feared they will never coalesce, since the former imply the subsistence of those ties which the latter suppose to be dissolved. Hence the morality of peaceful times is directly opposite to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good; of the latter to inflict injuries. The former commands us to succour the oppressed; the latter to overwhelm the defenceless. The former teaches men to love their enemies; the latter to make themselves terrible even to strangers. The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interest by falsehood; the maxims of war applaud it when employed in the destruction of others. That a familiarity with such maxims must tend to harden the heart, as well as to pervert the moral sentiments, is too obvious to need illustration. The natural consequence of their prevalence is an unfeeling and unprincipled ambition, with an idolatry of talents, and a contempt of virtue; whence the esteem of mankind is turned from the humble, the beneficent, and the good, to men who are qualified by a genius fertile in expedients, a courage that is never appalled, and a heart that never pities, to become the destroyers of the earth. While the philanthropist is devising means to mitigate the evils and augment the happiness of the world, a fellow worker together with God, in exploring and giving effect to the benevolent tendencies of nature, the warrior is revolving, in the gloomy recesses of his capacious mind, plans of future devastation and ruin. Prisons crowded with captives, cities emptied of their inhabitants, fields desolate and waste, are among his proudest trophies. The fabric of his fame is cemented with tears and blood; and if his name is wafted to the ends of the earth, it is in the shrill cry of suffering humanity; in the curses and imprecations of those whom his sword has reduced to despair.

Let me not be understood to involve in this guilt every man

who engages in war, or to assert that war itself is in all cases unlawful. The injustice of mankind, hitherto incurable, renders it in some instances necessary, and therefore lawful; but unquestionably, these instances are much more rare than the practice of the world and its loose casuistry would lead us to suppose.

Detesting war, considered as a trade or profession, and conceiving conquerors to be the enemies of their species, it appears* to me that nothing is more suitable to the office of a Christian minister, than an attempt, however feeble, to take off the colours from false greatness, and to show the deformity which its delusive splendour too often conceals. This is perhaps one of the best services religion can do to society. Nor is there any more necessary. For, dominion affording a plain and palpable distinction, and every man feeling the effects of power, however incompetent he may be to judge of wisdom and goodness, the character of a hero, there is reason to fear, will always be too dazzling. The sense of his injustice will be too often lost in the admiration of his success.

In contemplating the influence of war on public morals, it would be unpardonable not to remark the effects it never fails to produce in those parts of the world which are its immediate seat. The injury which the morals of a people sustain from an invading army is prodigious. The agitation and suspense universally prevalent are incompatible with everything which requires calm thought or serious reflection. In such a situation is it any wonder the duties of piety fall into neglect, the sanctuary of God is forsaken, and the gates of Zion mourn and are desolate? Familiarized to the sight of rapine and slaughter, the people must acquire a hard and unfeeling character. The precarious tenure by which everything is held during the absence of laws, must impair confidence; the sudden revolutions of fortune must be infinitely favourable to fraud and injustice. He who reflects on these consequences will not think it too much to affirm, that the injury the virtue of a people sustains from invasion is greater than that which affects their property or their lives. He will perceive, that by

* "Non est inter artificia bellum, imo res est tam horrenda, ut eam nisi summa necessitas, aut vera caritas, honestam efficere queat. Augustino judice, militare non est delictum, sed propter prædam militare peccatum est."—*Grot. de Jure Bell.*, lib. ii. c. 25.

such a calamity the seeds of order, virtue, and piety, which it is the first care of education to implant and mature, are swept away as by a hurricane.

Though the sketch which I have attempted to give of the miseries which ensue, when nation lifts up arms against nation, is faint and imperfect, it is yet sufficient to imprint on our minds a salutary horror of such scenes, and a gratitude, warm, I trust, and sincere, to that gracious Providence which has brought them to a close.

To acknowledge the hand of God is a duty indeed at all times; but there are seasons when it is made so bare, that it is next to impossible, and therefore signally criminal, to overlook it. It is almost unnecessary to add that the present is one of those seasons. If ever we are expected to *be still, and know that he is God*, it is on the present occasion, after a crisis so unexampled in the annals of the world; during which scenes have been disclosed, and events have arisen, so much more astonishing than any that history had recorded or romance had feigned, that we are compelled to lose sight of human agency, and to behold the Deity acting as it were apart and alone.

The contest in which we have been lately engaged is distinguished from all others in modern times by the number of nations it embraced, and the animosity with which it was conducted. Making its first appearance in the centre of the civilized world, like a fire kindled in the thickest part of a forest, it spread during ten years on every side; it burnt in all directions, gathering fresh fury in its progress, till it enwrapped the whole of Europe in its flames; an awful spectacle, not only to the inhabitants of the earth, but in the eyes of superior beings! What place can we point out to which its effects have not extended? Where is the nation, the family, the individual I might almost say, who has not felt its influence? It is not, my brethren, the termination of an ordinary contest which we are assembled this day to commemorate; it is an event which includes for the present (may it long perpetuate) the tranquillity of Europe and the pacification of the world. We are met to express our devout gratitude to God for putting a period to a war the most eventful perhaps that has been witnessed for a thousand years, a war which has transformed the face of Europe, removed the land-marks of nations and limits of empire.

The spirit of animosity with which it has been conducted is another circumstance which has eminently distinguished the recent contest. As it would be highly improper to enter, on this occasion (were my abilities equal to the task), into a discussion of those principles which have divided, and probably will long divide, the sentiments of men, it may be sufficient to observe, in general, that what principally contributed to make the contest so peculiarly violent, was a discordancy betwixt the opinions and the institutions of society. A daring spirit of speculation, untempered, alas! by humility and devotion, has been the distinguishing feature of the present times. While it confined itself to the exposure of the corruptions of religion and the abuses of power, it met with some degree of countenance from the wise and good in all countries, who were ready to hope it was the instrument destined by Providence to meliorate the condition of mankind. How great was their disappointment when they perceived that pretensions to philanthropy were, with many, only a mask assumed for the more successful propagation of impiety and anarchy!

From the prevalence of this spirit, however, a schism was gradually formed between the adherents of those who, styling themselves philosophers, were intent on some great change, which they were little careful to explain, and the patrons of the ancient order of things. The pretensions of each were plausible. The accumulation of abuses and the corruptions of religion furnished weapons to the philosophers; the dangerous tendency of the speculations of these latter, together with their impiety, which became every day more manifest, gave an advantage not less considerable to their opponents, which they did not fail to improve. In this situation the breach grew wider and wider; nothing temperate or conciliating was admitted. Every attempt at purifying religion without impairing its authority, and at improving the condition of society without shaking its foundation, was crushed and annihilated in the encounter of two hostile forces. By this means the way was prepared, first for internal dissension, and then for wars the most bloody and extensive.

The war in which so great a part of the world was lately engaged has been frequently styled a war of principle. This was indeed its exact character; and it was this which rendered it so violent and obstinate. Disputes which are founded merely on passion or on interest, are comparatively of short

duration. They are, at least, not calculated to spread. However they may inflame the principals, they are but little adapted to gain partisans.

To render them durable, there must be an infusion of speculative opinions. For corrupt as men are, they are yet so much the creatures of reflection, and so strongly addicted to sentiments of right and wrong, that their attachment to a public cause can rarely be secured, or their animosity kept alive, unless their understandings are engaged by some appearances of truth and rectitude. Hence speculative differences in religion and politics become rallying points to the passions. Whoever reflects on the civil wars between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the adherents of the pope and emperor, which distracted Italy and Germany in the middle ages; or those betwixt the houses of York and Lancaster, in the fifteenth century; will find abundant confirmation of this remark. This is well understood by the leaders of parties in all nations; who, though they frequently aim at nothing more than the attainment of power, yet always contrive to cement the attachment of their followers, by mixing some speculative opinion with their contests, well knowing that what depends for support merely on the irascible passions soon subsides. Then does party animosity reach its height, when, to an interference of interests sufficient to kindle resentment, is superadded a persuasion of rectitude, a conviction of truth, an apprehension in each party that they are contending for principles of the last importance, on the success of which the happiness of millions depends. Under these impressions men are apt to indulge the most selfish and vindictive passions without suspicion or control. The understanding, indeed, in that state, instead of controlling the passions, often serves only to give steadiness to their impulse, to ratify and consecrate, so to speak, all their movements.

When we apply these remarks to the late contest, we can be at no loss to discover the source of the unparalleled animosity which inflamed it. Never before were so many opposing interests, passions, and principles committed to such a decision. On one side an attachment to the ancient order of things, on the other a passionate desire of change; a wish in some to perpetuate, in others to destroy every thing; every abuse sacred in the eyes of the former, every foundation

attempted to be demolished by the latter; a jealousy of power shrinking from the slightest innovation, pretensions to freedom pushed to madness and anarchy; superstition in all its dotage, impiety in all its fury: whatever, in short, could be found most discordant in the principles, or violent in the passions of men, were the fearful ingredients which the hand of divine justice selected to mingle in this furnace of wrath. Can we any longer wonder at the desolations it made in the earth? Great as they are, they are no more than might be expected from the peculiar nature of the warfare. When we take this into our consideration, we are no longer surprised to find that the variety of its battles burdens the memory, that the imagination is perfectly fatigued in travelling over its scenes of slaughter, and that falling, like the mystic star in the Apocalypse, *upon the streams and the rivers, it turned the third part of their waters into blood.**

Whether the foundations of lasting tranquillity are laid, or a respite only afforded to the nations of the earth, in the present auspicious event, is a question the discussion of which would only damp the satisfaction of this day. Whatever may be the future determinations of Providence, let no gloomy foreboding depress our gratitude for its gracious interposition in our favour. While we feel sentiments of respectful acknowledgment to the human instruments employed, let us remember they are but instruments, and that it is our duty to look through them to Him who is the author of every good and perfect gift.

Let us now turn to the pleasing part of our subject, which invites us to contemplate the reasons for gratitude and joy suggested by the restoration of peace.

Permit me to express my hope, that along with peace the spirit of peace will return. How can we better imitate our heavenly Father, than, when he is pleased to compose the animosities of nations, to open our hearts to every milder influence? Let us hope, more mutual forbearance, a more

* The author has inserted some reflections here which were not included in the discourse as delivered from the pulpit. He wished to explain himself somewhat more fully on certain points, on which his sentiments in a former publication have been much misunderstood or misrepresented. But this is a circumstance with which, as it has not troubled himself, he wishes not any farther to trouble the reader.

candid construction of each other's views and sentiments, will prevail. No end can now be answered by the revival of party disputes. The speculations which gave occasion to them have yielded to the arbitration of the sword, and neither the fortune of war, nor the present condition of Europe, is such as affords to any party room for high exultation. Our public and private affections are no longer at variance. That benevolence which embraces the world, is now in perfect harmony with the tenderness that endears our country. Burying in oblivion, therefore, all national antipathies, together with those cruel jealousies and suspicions which have too much marred the pleasures of mutual intercourse, let our hearts correspond to the blessing we celebrate, and keep pace, as far as possible, with the movements of divine beneficence.

A most important benefit has already followed the return of peace, a reduction of the price of bread; and though other necessaries of life have not fallen in proportion, this is a circumstance which can hardly fail to follow. We trust the circumstances of the poor and the labouring classes will be much improved, and that there will shortly be no complaining in our streets. Every cottager, we hope, will feel that there is peace; commerce return to its ancient channels, the public burdens be lightened, the national debt diminished, and harmony and plenty again gladden the land.

In enumerating the motives to national gratitude, which the retrospect of the past supplies, it would be unpardonable not to reckon among the most cogent, the preservation of our excellent constitution; nor can I doubt of the concurrence of all who hear me when I add, it is a pleasing reflection, that at a period when the spirit of giddiness and revolt has been so prevalent, we have preferred the blessings of order to a phantom of liberty, and have not been so mad as to wade through the horrors of a revolution to make way for a military despot. If the constitution has sustained serious injury, either during the war or at any preceding period, as there is great room to apprehend, we shall have leisure (may we but have virtue!) to apply temperate and effectual reforms. In the mean time, let us love it sincerely, cherish it tenderly, and secure it as far as possible, on all sides, watching with impartial solicitude against every thing that may impair its spirit, or endanger its form.

But above all, let us cherish the spirit of religion. When we wish to open our hearts on this subject, and to represent to you the vanity, the nothingness of every thing else in comparison, we feel ourselves checked by an apprehension you will consider it merely as professional language, and consequently entitled to little regard. If, however, you will only turn your eyes to the awful scenes before you, our voice may be spared. They will speak loud enough of themselves. On this subject they will furnish the most awful and momentous instruction. From them you will learn, that the safety of nations is not to be sought in arts or in arms; that science may flourish amidst the decay of humanity; that the utmost barbarity may be blended with the utmost refinement; that a passion for speculation, unrestrained by the fear of God and a deep sense of human imperfection, merely hardens the heart; and that, as religion, in short, is the great tamer of the breast, the source of tranquillity and order, so the crimes of voluptuousness and impiety inevitably conduct a people, before they are aware, to the brink of desolation and anarchy.

If you had wished to figure to yourselves a country which had reached the utmost pinnacle of prosperity, you would undoubtedly have turned your eyes to France, as she appeared a few years before the revolution; illustrious in learning and genius; the favourite abode of the arts, and the mirror of fashion, whither the flower of the nobility from all countries resorted, to acquire the last polish of which the human character is susceptible. Lulled in voluptuous repose, and dreaming of a philosophical millennium without dependence upon God, like the generation before the flood, *they ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage.* In that exuberant soil every thing seemed to flourish but religion and virtue. The season however was at length arrived, when God was resolved to punish their impiety, as well as to avenge the blood of his servants, whose souls had for a century been incessantly crying to him from under the altar. And what method did he employ for this purpose? When He to whom vengeance belongs, when He whose ways are unsearchable, and whose wisdom is inexhaustible, proceeded to the execution of this strange work, he drew from his treasures a weapon he had never employed before. Resolving to make their punishment as signal as their crimes, he neither let loose an inun-

dation of barbarous nations, nor the desolating powers of the universe: he neither overwhelmed them with earthquakes, nor visited them with pestilence. He summoned from among themselves a ferocity more terrible than either; a ferocity which, mingling in the struggle for liberty, and borrowing aid from that very refinement to which it seemed to be opposed, turned every man's hand against his neighbour, sparing no age, nor sex, nor rank, till, satiated with the ruin of greatness, the distresses of innocence, and the tears of beauty, it terminated its career in the most unrelenting despotism. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and which wast, and which shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.*

If the weakness of humanity will not permit us to keep pace with the movements of divine justice; if, from the deep commiseration excited by the view of so much woe, our tongue falters in expressing those sublime sentiments of triumph which revelation suggests on this occasion, we shall be pardoned by the Being who knows our frame; while nothing can prevent us, at least, from adoring this illustrious vindication of his own religion, whose divinity we see is not less apparent in the blessings it bestows than in the calamities which mark its departure.

Our only security against similar calamities is a steady adherence to this religion; not the religion of mere form and profession, but that which has a seat in the heart; not as it is mutilated and debased by the refinements of a false philosophy, but as it exists in all its simplicity and extent in the sacred Scriptures; consisting in sorrow for sin, in the love of God, and in faith in a crucified Redeemer. If this religion revives and flourishes amongst us, we may still surmount all our difficulties, and no weapon formed against us will prosper: if we despise or neglect it, no human power can afford us protection. Instead of showing our love to our country, therefore, by engaging eagerly in the strife of parties, let us choose to signalize it rather by beneficence, by piety, by an exemplary discharge of the duties of private life, under a persuasion that that man, in the final issue of things, will be seen to have been the best patriot who is the best Christian. He who diffuses the most happiness, and mitigates the most distress

within his own circle, is undoubtedly the best friend to his country and the world, since nothing more is necessary than for all men to imitate his conduct, to make the greatest part of the misery of the world cease in a moment. While the passion, then, of some is to shine, of some to govern, and of others to accumulate, let one great passion alone inflame our breasts, let the passion which reason ratifies, which conscience approves, which heaven inspires, that of being and of doing good.

There is no vanity, I trust, in supposing that the reflections which this discourse has presented to your view, have awakened those sentiments of gratitude to the Father of mercies for his gracious interposition in the restoration of peace, which you are impatient to express by stronger evidence than words. Should this be the case, a plain path is before you. While the eminence of the divine perfections renders it impossible for us to contribute to the happiness, or augment the glory of the Creator, he has left amongst us, for the exercise of our virtue, the indigent and the afflicted, whom he has in an especial manner committed to our care, and appointed to represent himself. The objects of the institution, for which I have this day the honour to plead, are those of whom the very mention is sufficient to excite compassion in every feeling mind, *the sick and the aged poor.** To be scantily provided with the necessaries of life, to endure cold, hunger, and nakedness, is a great calamity at all seasons; it is almost unnecessary to observe how much these evils are aggravated by the pressure of disease, when exhausted nature demands whatever the most tender assiduity can supply to cheer its languor and support its sufferings. It is the peculiar misfortune of the

* It may be proper to remind the reader that this discourse was preached for the benefit of a Benevolent Society, recently instituted at Cambridge, for the relief of the sick and aged poor; and that one principal motive with the author for complying with the request of the Society in publishing it, was a desire to excite the attention of the benevolent to the formation of similar societies in other parts. For the local information of such as may be desirous of contributing to this Institution, the writer has the pleasure to add, that Mr. Alderman Ind, with that benignity which marks his character, has been so kind as to undertake the office of treasurer to the society, to whom the benevolent are requested to send their annual subscriptions or donations. A further account of the institution will be found at the end of the sermon.

afflicted poor, that the very circumstance which increases their wants, cuts off, by disqualifying them for labour, the means of their supply. Bodily affliction, therefore, falls upon them with an accumulated weight. Poor at best, when seized with sickness they become utterly destitute. Incapable even of presenting themselves to the eye of pity, nothing remains for them but silently to yield themselves up to sorrow and despair. The second class of objects, which it is the design of this society to relieve, are *the aged poor*. Here it is quite unnecessary for me to attempt to paint to you the sorrows of old age; a period indeed which, by a strange inconsistency, we all wish to reach, while we shrink with a sort of horror from the infirmities and sufferings inseparable from that melancholy season. What can be a more pitiable object than decrepitude, sinking under the accumulated load of years and of penury? Arrived at that period when the most fortunate confess they have no pleasure, how forlorn is his situation who, destitute of the means of subsistence, has survived his last child, or his last friend. Solitary and neglected, without comfort and without hope, depending for every thing on a kindness he has no means of conciliating, he finds himself left alone in a world to which he has ceased to belong, and is only felt in society as a burden it is impatient to shake off. Such are the objects to which this institution solicits your regard.

It is, in my humble opinion, a most excellent part of the plan of the Society, in whose behalf I address you, that no relief is administered without first personally visiting the objects in their own abode. By such means the precise circumstances of each case are clearly ascertained, and imposture is sure to be detected. Where charity is administered without this precaution, as it is impossible to discriminate real from pretended distress, the most disinterested benevolence often fails of its purpose; and that is yielded to clamorous importunity which is withheld from lonely want. The mischief extends much farther. From the frequency of such imposition, the best minds are in danger of becoming disgusted with the exercise of pecuniary charity, till, from a mistaken persuasion that it is impossible to guard against deception, they treat the most abandoned and the most deserving with the same neglect. Thus the heart contracts into selfishness, and those delicious emotions which the benevolent Author of

Nature implanted to prompt us to relieve distress, become extinct; a loss greater to ourselves than to the objects to whom we deny our compassion. To prevent a degradation of character so fatal, allow me to urge on all whom Providence has blessed with the means of doing good, on those especially who are indulged with affluence and leisure, the importance of employing some portion of their time in *inspecting*, as well as of their property in *relieving*, the distresses of the time.

By this means an habitual tenderness will be cherished, which will heighten inexpressibly the happiness of life, at the same time that it will most effectually counteract that selfishness which a continual addictedness to the pursuits of avarice and ambition never fails to produce. As selfishness is a principle of continual operation, it needs to be opposed by some other principle, whose operation is equally uniform and steady; but the casual impulse of compassion, excited by occasional applications for relief, is by no means equal to this purpose. Then only will benevolence become a prevailing habit of mind, when its exertion enters into the *system* of life, and occupies some stated portion of the time and attention. In addition to this, it is worth while to reflect how much consolation the poor must derive from finding they are the objects of personal attention to their more opulent neighbours; that they are acknowledged as brethren of the same family; and that, should they be overtaken with affliction or calamity, they are in no danger of perishing unpitied and unnoticed. With all the pride that wealth is apt to inspire, how seldom are the opulent truly aware of their high destination! Placed by the Lord of all on an eminence, and intrusted with a superior portion of his goods, to them it belongs to be the dispensers of his bounty, to succour distress, to draw merit from obscurity, to behold oppression and want vanish before them, and, accompanied wherever they move with perpetual benedictions, to present an image of Him who, at the close of time in the kingdom of the redeemed, will *wipe away tears from all faces*. It is surely unnecessary to remark how insipid are the pleasures of voluptuousness and ambition, compared to what such a life must afford, whether we compare them with respect to the present, the review of the past, or the prospect of the future.

It is probable some may object that such exertions, how-

ever amiable in themselves, are rendered unnecessary by the system of parochial relief established in this country. To which it is obvious to reply, that however useful this institution may be, there must always be a great deal of distress which it can never relieve. Like all national institutions, it is incapable of bending from the rigour of general rules, so as to adapt itself to the precise circumstance of each respective case. Besides that it would be vain to expect much tenderness in the execution of a legal office, the machine itself, though it may be well suited to the general purpose it is intended to answer, is too large and unwieldy to touch those minute points of difference, those distinct kinds and gradations of distress, to which the operation of personal benevolence will easily adapt itself. In addition to which it will occur to those who reflect, that on account of the increasing demands of the poor, the parochial system, which presses hard upon many ill able to bear it, is already strained to the utmost.

Although the Society in whose behalf I address you is but recently established, it has been enabled painfully to ascertain the vast proportion of its objects of the female sex,—a melancholy circumstance, deserving the serious attention of the public on more accounts than one. Of the cases which have occurred to their notice, since the commencement of their labours, more than three-fourths have been of that description. The situation of females without fortune in this country is indeed deeply affecting. Excluded from all the active employments in which they might engage with the utmost propriety, by men, who to the injury of one sex add the disgrace of making the other effeminate and ridiculous, an indigent female, the object probably of love and tenderness in her youth, at a more advanced age a withered flower, has nothing to do but to retire and die. Thus it comes to pass, that the most amiable part of our species, by a detestable combination in those who ought to be their protectors, are pushed off the stage, as though they were no longer worthy to live, when they ceased to be the objects of passion. How strongly on this account this Society is entitled to your attention (as words would fail) I leave to the pensive reflection of your own bosoms.

To descant on the evils of poverty might seem entirely

unnecessary (for what with most is the great business of life, but to remove it to the greatest possible distance?), were it not, that besides its being the most common of all evils, there are circumstances peculiar to itself, which expose it to neglect. The seat of its sufferings are the appetites, not the passions; appetites which are common to all, and which, being capable of no peculiar combinations, confer no distinction. There are kinds of distress founded on the passions, which, if not applauded, are at least admired in their excess, as implying a peculiar refinement of sensibility in the mind of the sufferer. Embellished by taste, and wrought by the magic of genius into innumerable forms, they turn grief into a luxury, and draw from the eyes of millions delicious tears. But no muse ever ventured to adorn the distresses of poverty or the sorrows of hunger. Disgusting taste and delicacy, and presenting nothing pleasing to the imagination, they are mere misery in all its nakedness and deformity. Hence, shame in the sufferer, contempt in the beholder, and an obscurity of station, which frequently removes them from the view, are their inseparable portion. Nor can I reckon it on this account amongst the improvements of the present age, that, by the multiplication of works of fiction, the attention is diverted from scenes of real to those of imaginary distress; from the distress which demands relief, to that which admits of embellishment: in consequence of which the understanding is enervated, the heart is corrupted, and those feelings which were designed to stimulate to active benevolence are employed in nourishing a sickly sensibility. To a most impure and whimsical writer,* whose very humanity is unnatural, we are considerably indebted for this innovation. Though it cannot be denied, that by diffusing a warmer colouring over the visions of fancy, sensibility is often a source of exquisite pleasures to others, if not to the possessor, yet it should never be confounded with benevolence; since it constitutes at best rather the ornament of a fine, than the virtue of a good mind. A good man may have nothing of it, a bad man may have it in abundance.

* The author alludes to Sterne, the whole tendency of whose writings is to degrade human nature, by resolving all our passions into a mere animal instinct, and that of the grossest sort. It was perfectly natural for such a writer to employ his powers in panegyrising an ass.

Leaving therefore these amusements of the imagination to the vain and indolent, let us awake to nature and truth; and in a world from which we must so shortly be summoned, a world abounding with so many real scenes of heart-rending distress, as well as of vice and impiety, employ all our powers in relieving the one and in correcting the other; that when we have arrived at the borders of eternity, we may not be tormented with the awful reflection of having lived in vain.

If ever there was a period when poverty made a more forcible appeal than usual to the heart, it is unquestionably that which we have lately witnessed; the calamities of which, though greatly diminished by the auspicious event which we now celebrate, are far from being entirely removed. Poverty used in happier times to be discerned in a superior meanness of apparel and the total absence of ornament. We have seen its ravages reach the *man*, proclaiming themselves in the trembling step, in the dejected countenance, and the faded form. We have seen emaciated infants, no ruddiness in their cheeks, no sprightliness in their motions, while the eager and imploring looks of their mothers, reduced below the loud expressions of grief, have announced unutterable anguish and silent despair.

From the reflections which have been made on the peculiar nature of poverty, you will easily account for the prodigious stress which is laid on the duty of pecuniary benevolence in the Old and New Testaments. In the former, God delighted in assuming the character of the patron of the poor and needy; in the latter, the short definition of the religion which he approves, *is to visit the fatherless and widow, and keep himself unspotted from the world.* He who knew what was in man, well knew that, since the entrance of sin, selfishness was become the epidemic disease of human nature; a malady which almost every thing tends to inflame, and the conquest of which is absolutely necessary, before we can be prepared for the felicity of heaven; that whatever leads us out of ourselves, whatever unites us to him and his creatures in pure love, is an important step towards the recovery of his image; and finally, that his church would consist for the most part of *the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, whom he was resolved to shield from the con-

tempt of all who respect his authority, by selecting them from the innumerable millions of mankind to be the peculiar representatives of himself.

Happy are they whose lives correspond to these benevolent intentions; who, looking beyond the transitory distinctions which prevail here, and will vanish at the first approach of eternity, honour God in his children, and Christ in his image. How much, on the contrary, are those to be pitied, in whatever sphere they move, who live to themselves, unmindful of the coming of their Lord! *When he shall come and shall not keep silence, when a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him*, every thing, it is true, will combine to fill them with consternation; yet methinks neither the voice of the archangel, nor the trump of God, nor the dissolution of the elements, nor the face of the Judge itself, from which the heavens will flee away, will be so dismaying and terrible to these men as the sight of the poor members of Christ; whom having spurned and neglected in the days of their humiliation, they will then behold with amazement united to their Lord, covered with his glory, and seated on his throne. How will they be astonished to see them surrounded with so much majesty! How will they cast down their eyes in their presence! How will they curse that gold which will then eat their flesh as with fire, and that avarice, that indolence, that voluptuousness, which will entitle them to so much misery! You will then learn that the imitation of Christ is the only wisdom; you will then be convinced it is better to be endeared to the cottage than admired in the palace; when to have wiped away the tears of the afflicted, and inherited the prayers of the widow and the fatherless, shall be found a richer patrimony than the favour of princes.

ACCOUNT OF

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,

FOR THE

RELIEF OF THE SICK AND AGED POOR,

Instituted at Cambridge, 1801.

Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor. Psalm xli. 1.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matt. xxv. 40.

THAT benevolence is an habitual duty, arising out of our constitution as rational and social creatures, and enforced upon us by the most powerful motives as Christians, no one will deny. The various exertions of the humane and the pious, in private circles and in public institutions, are so many proofs of the truth of this sentiment: but notwithstanding those exertions, there is still ample room for enlargement. Those persons who are in the habit of visiting the cottages or the chambers of the poor, are too frequently the melancholy witnesses of that extreme poverty, pining sickness, and poignant distress, which energetically call for relief.

With the design of administering, in some degree, such relief, a number of persons have formed themselves into a Society, the nature and objects of which are such, that it may, with the greatest truth, be said to *deserve*, and it can scarcely be doubted but it will *meet* with such encouragement as may render it a blessing to the poor of the town of CAMBRIDGE. It is likewise ardently hoped, that the Society will meet with such farther encouragement, that its benevolent exertions may not be confined to the town, but extended to the neighbouring villages.

The FIRST object of the Society is to afford PECUNIARY

ASSISTANCE to the SICK and the AGED POOR. To select proper objects, and guard against the abuses attending indiscriminate relief, visitors will be appointed to examine and judge of the nature of every case, and report the same to a Committee of the Society.

The SECOND object of the Society is—The MORAL and RELIGIOUS improvement of the objects relieved. *A word spoken in season* (says the wise man), *how good is it!* The hour of affliction, the bed of sickness, afford the most seasonable opportunities for usefulness; and it is hoped that the heart may in a more peculiar manner be open to the best of impressions at such a season, and when under a sense of obligation for relief already administered.

In a Society like the present, all distinctions of sects and parties are lost in the one general design of DOING GOOD; and the success which has attended societies, nearly similar, in different parts of this kingdom, and more particularly in the metropolis, in relieving the distress and ameliorating the condition of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures, affords reason to hope, that under the divine blessing, similar success will attend the Society established in this town.

RULES.

I. Any person, of whatever denomination, age, or sex, disposed to assist this benevolent undertaking, may be admitted a Subscriber; each Subscriber, on admission, to pay *not less* than one shilling, and from two-pence per week to any sum such Subscriber may think proper.

II. That the business of the Society be managed by a Committee of fourteen persons, including the Treasurer and Secretary; five of whom shall be competent to transact business:—that the Committee be open to any member of the Society who may think proper to attend. In case of any vacancy in the Committee, by death, or resignation, the remaining members of the Committee be empowered to fill up such vacancy.

III. That the Committee meet monthly, at each others' houses, to receive reports, consider of cases, appoint visitors, and audit their accounts.

IV. That there be an annual general meeting, of which

due notice will be given, when the state of the Society shall be reported, and the Treasurer, Secretary, and Committee appointed, to manage the concerns thereof.

V. That the SICK and the AGED be esteemed the *only* objects of the compassion of this Society; and when the fund is reduced to the sum of five pounds, the cases of the sick alone shall be attended to.

VI. That no member be allowed to recommend a case, until three months after his or her subscription has commenced, nor, if four months in arrears, until such arrears be discharged, provided he or she has received notice of the same.

VII. That no case be received but from a Subscriber, who is expected to be well acquainted with the case recommended, and to report the particulars to one of the visitors.

VIII. That the Visitors be appointed to administer relief, and not the person who recommends the case.

IX. That no Subscribers, while they continue such, shall receive any relief from this Society, nor shall any of those who conduct the business thereof receive any gratuity for their services.

The Committee consists of an equal number of Ladies and Gentlemen; and persons of both sexes are appointed as visitors in rotation.

Subscriptions and Donations are received by the Treasurer, Secretary, or any Member of the Committee.

At a General Meeting of the Society, held, agreeably to public notice, at Mr. Alderman IND's, on Monday, May 3, 1802:—It was resolved, That when the Annual Subscriptions of the Society amount to *Sixty* Pounds, and the Fund to *Thirty* Pounds, the Committee be empowered to extend relief to other distressed objects besides the SICK and the AGED.

THE SENTIMENTS PROPER TO THE PRESENT CRISIS

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

BRIDGE STREET, BRISTOL,

OCTOBER 19, 1803;

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL FAST.

Uter esset, non uter imperaret.—*Cicero.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME apology is due to the public for this discourse appearing so long after it was preached. The fact is, the writer was engaged on an exchange of services for a month with his highly esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Lowell, of Bristol, author of an excellent volume of Sermons on Practical Subjects, at the time it was delivered, and had no opportunity of writing it till he returned. As it touches entirely on permanent topics, except what relates to the threatened invasion, still impending over us, he knows not but it may be as suitable now as if it had appeared earlier. As it is, he commits it to the candour of the public. He has only to add, that the allusion to the effects of the tragic muse* should have been marked as a quotation, though the author knows not with certainty to whom to ascribe it. He believes it fell from the elegant pen of an illustrious female, Mrs. More.

* Page 365.

SHELFORD,
Nov. 30, 1803.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In this edition, the author has corrected those errors of the press which in the former were very considerable. The Monthly Reviewers have founded a criticism entirely on one of them. The author had remarked, that infidelity was bred in the stagnant marshes of corrupted Christianity. The printer having omitted the word *corrupted*, the reviewers remark that they never found in their map of Christianity any stagnant marshes. Having mentioned the Monthly Reviewers, he must be permitted to notice a most singular error into which they have been betrayed; that of supposing the author had confounded Aristotle with Mrs. More. It is well known to every one who has the smallest tincture of learning, that the great critic of antiquity represents the design of tragedy to be that of purifying the heart by pity and terror. It appeared to the author that infidelity, by the crimes and disorders it has produced in society, was not incapable of answering a similar purpose. He accordingly availed himself of the comparison; but it having occurred to him afterwards that he had read a similar passage in Mrs. More, he thought it right to notice this circumstance in an advertisement; in which he says he apprehends the *allusion* to the tragic muse to belong to Mrs. More. It was not the opinion of its being the purpose of tragedy to purify the heart by pity and terror, that he ascribed to that celebrated female; but *solely the allusion* to that opinion as illustrating the effect of infidelity. It is on this slender foundation, however, that the writer in the Monthly Review, with what design is best known to himself, has thought fit to represent him as ascribing to Mrs. More, as its author, a critical opinion which has been current for more than two thousand years. He is certain his words will not support any such construction, though he will not contend that he has expressed himself with all the clearness that might be wished.

He is sorry to find some passages towards the close of the sermon have given offence to persons whom he highly esteems. It has been objected, that the author has admitted to heaven

a crowd of legislators, patriots, and heroes, whose title to that honour, on Christian principles, is very equivocal. In reply to which, he begs it to be remembered that the New Testament teaches, that *God is no respecter of persons; that in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him;* that we may be certain there will not be wanting in the innumerable assembly around the throne, some of the highest rank and of the most illustrious talents; and that the writer has qualified the character of those legislators and patriots, whom he has represented as being in heaven, with the epithet of *virtuous;* and this after he had been at some *pains to explain what he comprehended in his idea of virtue.* He has been censured for attempting to animate the defenders of their country, by holding out the prospect of immortality, should they fall in the contest; and it has been asked why, instead of amusing them with this phantom, not endeavour to convince them of the necessity of religious preparation for death, when he must be aware it is very possible for men to die fighting in defence of their country, and yet fall short of future happiness. The writer is indeed fully persuaded, that in the concerns of salvation no reliance ought to be placed on a detached instance of virtuous conduct; that a solid piety is indispensably necessary, and that *without holiness no man can see the Lord.* But, after having employed great part of the preceding discourse in urging the necessity of repentance, he may surely be allowed for a moment to take it for granted that his admonitions have been attended to; and, without treading over the same ground, in an address to men who are supposed to be just entering the field, to advert to topics more immediately connected with military prowess. It was never his intention to place worldly on a level with religious considerations, or to confound the sentiments of honour with the dictates of duty. But as the fear of death and the love of fame are both natural, and both innocent within certain limits, he was not aware there could be any impropriety, when he had already dwelt largely on religious topics, to oppose one natural sentiment to another. He who confines himself to such considerations violates the character of the Christian minister; he who neglects them entirely is wanting to the duties of the present crisis. The writer has only to add on this head, that, in the addresses on

similar occasions in the Scriptures, there is rarely a greater mixture of religious topics, or more reserve in appealing to other motives, than is found here; so that, if he has erred, his error is countenanced by the highest, that is, by inspired, authority.

Finally, he has been censured for expressing, in such strong terms, his detestation of the character of Buonaparte. It has been said, that however just his representation may be, it is losing sight of the true design of a national fast, which is to confess and bewail our own sins, instead of inveighing against the sins of others. That this is the true end of a public fast, the writer is convinced; on which account he has expressly cautioned his readers against placing reliance on their supposed superiority in virtue to their enemies. What he has said of the character of Buonaparte is with an entirely different view; it is urged, not as a ground of security, but as a motive to the most vigorous resistance. In this view, it is impossible for it to be too deeply impressed. When a people are threatened with invasion, will it be affirmed that the personal character of the invader is of no consequence; and that it is not worth a moment's consideration whether he possess the virtuous moderation of a Washington, or the restless and insatiable ambition of a Buonaparte? Though hostile invasion is an unspeakable calamity in any situation, and under any circumstances, yet it is capable of as many modifications as the dispositions and designs of the invaders; and if in the present instance the crimes of our enemy supply the most cogent motives to resistance, can it be wrong to turn his vices against himself; and, by imprinting a deep abhorrence of his perfidy and cruelty on the hearts of the people, to put them more thoroughly on their guard against their effects?

It may be thought a sermon on a fast-day should have comprehended a fuller enumeration of our national sins, and this was the author's design when he first turned his attention to the subject: but he was diverted from it by observing that these themes, from the press at least, seem to make no kind of impression; and that whatever the most skilful preacher can advance is fastidiously repelled as stale and professional declamation. The people in general are settled into an indifference so profound, with respect to all such subjects, that the preacher who arraigns their vices in the most vehement

manner has no reason to be afraid of exciting their displeasure; but it is well if, long before he has finished his reproofs, he has not lulled them to sleep. From a due consideration of the temper of the times, he therefore thought it expedient to direct the attention to what appeared to him the chief source of public degeneracy, rather than insist at large on particular vices. He has in this edition, in some places, expanded the illustration where it appeared defective, as well as corrected the gross errors of the press which disfigured the discourse; being desirous, ere it descends to that oblivion which is the natural exit of such publications, of presenting it for once in an amended form, that it may at least be decently interred.

A SERMON.

JEREMIAH viii. 6.

I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

THOUGH we are well assured the Divine Being is attentive to the conduct of men at all times, yet it is but reasonable to believe he is peculiarly so whilst they are under his correcting hand. As *he does not willingly afflict the children of men*, he is wont to do it slowly, and at intervals, waiting, if we may so speak, to see whether the preceding chastisement will produce the sentiments which shall appease his anger, or those which shall confirm his resolution to punish. When sincere humiliation and sorrow for past offences takes place, his displeasure subsides, he relents and *repents himself of the evil.* Thus he speaks by the mouth of Jeremiah. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

We are this day assembled at the call of our Sovereign, to humble ourselves in the presence of Almighty God, under a sense of our sins, and to implore his interposition, that we may not be delivered into the hands of our enemies, nor fall a prey to the malice of those who hate us. It is surely, then, of the utmost consequence to see to it, that our humiliation be deep, our repentance sincere, and the dispositions we cherish, as well as the resolutions we form, suitable to the nature of the crisis and the solemnity of the occasion; such, in a word, as Omniscience will approve.

In the words of the text, the Lord reproaches the people of Israel with not speaking aright, and complains that, while he was waiting to hear the language of penitential sorrow and humiliation, he witnessed nothing but an insensibility to his reproofs, an obstinate perseverance in guilt, with a fatal eager-

ness to rush to their former courses. *He hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented himself of his iniquity, nor said, What have I done? But every one rushed to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.*

As the principles of the divine administration are invariable, and the situation of Great Britain, at this moment, not altogether unlike that of Israel at the time this portion of prophecy was penned, perhaps we cannot better improve the present solemnity than by taking occasion, from the words before us, to point out some of those sentiments and views which appear in the present crisis not to be *right;* and, after exploding these, to endeavour to substitute more correct ones in their stead.

1. They who content themselves with tracing national judgments to their national causes, without looking higher, entertain a view of the subject very inadequate to the demands of the present season. When you have imputed to the effects of an unparalleled convulsion on the continent, to the relative situation of foreign powers, to the turbulent passions and insatiable ambition of an individual, the evils which threaten us, what have you done to mitigate those evils? What alleviation have you afforded to perplexity and distress? They still exist in all their force. Far be it from me to attempt to discourage political inquiry. An inquiry into the sources of great events, an attempt to develope the more hidden causes which influence, under God, the destiny of nations, is an exercise of the mental powers more noble than almost any other, inasmuch as it embraces the widest field, and grasps a chain whose links are the most numerous, complicated, and subtle. The most profound political speculations, however, the most refined theories of government, though they establish the fame of their authors, will be found, perhaps, to have had very little influence on the happiness of nations. As the art of criticism never made an orator or a poet, though it enables us to judge of their merits, so the comprehensive speculation of modern times, which has reviewed and compared the manners and institutions of every age and country, has never formed a wise government or a happy people. It arrives too late for that purpose, since it owes its existence to an extensive survey of mankind, under a vast variety of forms, through all those periods of national improvement and decay, in which the

happiest efforts of wisdom and policy have been already made. The welfare of a nation depends much less on the refined wisdom of the few, than on the manners and character of the many: and as moral and religious principles have the chief influence in forming that character, so an acknowledgment of the hand of God, a deep sense of his dominion, is amongst the first of those principles. While we attend to the operation of second causes, let us never forget that there is a Being placed above them, who can move and arrange them at pleasure, and in whose hands they never fail to accomplish the purposes of his unerring counsel. The honour of the Supreme Ruler requires that his supremacy should be acknowledged, his agency confessed; nor is there any thing which he more intends by his chastisements than to extort this confession, or any thing he more highly resents than an attempt to exclude him from the concerns of his own world. *Woe unto them* (saith Isaiah) *that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.** The same prophet complains, that while the hand of Jehovah was lifted up they would not see; but he adds, *they shall see.* If lighter chastisements will not suffice, he has heavier in reserve; if they despise his reproofs, he will *render his anger with fury, his rebukes with flames of fire.* He is resolved to overcome; and what must be the issue of a contest with Omnipotence, it is as easy to foresee as it is painful to contemplate.

2. They *speak not aright*, who, instead of placing their reliance on God for safety, repose only on an arm of flesh.—The perfect unanimity which prevails, the ardour to defend every thing dear to us which is expressed by all classes; the sacrifices cheerfully made, the labours sustained, and the mighty preparations by sea and land, which the vigilance of government has set on foot to repel the enemy from our coasts, or insure his discomfiture should he arrive, must be highly satisfactory to every well-disposed mind. They afford, as far as human means can afford, a well-founded prospect of success. Though there is, on this account, no room to despond, but much, on the contrary, to lead us to anticipate a favourable

* Isaiah v. 11, 12.

issue to the contest; yet nothing, surely, can justify that language of extravagant boast, that proud confidence in our national force, without a dependence upon God, which, however fashionable it may be, is as remote from the dictates of true courage as of true piety. True courage is firm and unassuming; true piety, serious and humble. In the midst of all our preparations, we shall, if we are wise, repose our chief confidence in Him who has every element at his disposal; who can easily disconcert the wisest councils, confound the mightiest projects, and save, when he pleases, by many or by few. While the vanity of such a pretended reliance on Providence as supersedes the use of means is readily confessed, it is to be feared we are not sufficiently careful to guard against a contrary extreme, in its ultimate effects not less dangerous. If to depend on the interposition of Providence without human exertion be to tempt God; to confide in an arm of flesh, without seeking his aid, is to deny him; the former is to be pitied for its weakness, the latter to be censured for its impiety; nor is it easy to say which affords the worst omen of success. Let us avoid both these extremes; availing ourselves of all the resources which wisdom can suggest, or energy produce, let us still feel and acknowledge our absolute dependence upon God. With humble and contrite hearts, with filial confidence and affection, let us flee to his arms, that thus we may enjoy the united supports of reason and religion; and every principle, human and divine, may concur to assure us of our safety. Thus shall we effectually shun the denunciations so frequent and so terrible, contained in his holy word, against the vanity of human confidences. *Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.*

3. Their conduct is not to be approved, who, in the present crisis, indulge in *wanton* and *indiscriminate* censure of the measures of our rulers. I say *wanton* and *indiscriminate*, because the privilege of censuring, with moderation and decency, the measures of government, is essential to a free constitution; a privilege which can never lose its value in the eyes of the public, till it is licentiously abused. The temperate exercise of this privilege is a most useful restraint on those errors and excesses, to which the possession of power supplies a temptation. The free expression of the public voice is

capable of overawing those who have nothing beside to apprehend; and the tribunal of public opinion is one whose decisions it is not easy for men in the most elevated stations to despise. To this we may add, that the unrestrained discussion of national affairs not only *gives weight* to the sentiments, but is eminently adapted to *enlighten the minds*, of a people; and, consequently, to increase that general fund of talent and information, from which the accomplishments, even of statesmen themselves, must be ultimately derived. While, therefore, we maintain this privilege with jealous care, let us be equally careful not to abuse it. There is a respect, in my apprehension, due to civil governors *on account of their office*, which we are not permitted to violate, even when we are under the necessity of blaming their measures. When the apostle Paul was betrayed into an intemperate expression of anger against the Jewish High Priest, from an ignorance of the station he occupied, he was no sooner informed of this, than he apologised, and quoted a precept of the Mosaic law, which says, *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.* In agreement with which, the New Testament subjoins to the duty of fearing God, that of honouring the king; and frequently and emphatically inculcates submission to civil rulers, not so much from a fear of their power, as from a respect for their office.

The ancient prophets, it is true, in the immediate discharge of their functions, appear to have treated kings and princes with no sort of ceremony. But, before we establish their style into a precedent, let us recollect they were privileged persons, speaking expressly in the name of the Most High, who gave them his words, and invested them, for the moment, with a portion of his majesty.

Apart from the personal character of rulers, which are fluctuating and variable, you will find the apostles continually enjoin respect to government, *as government*, as a permanent ordinance of God, susceptible of various modifications from human wisdom, but essential, under some form or other, to the existence of society; and affording a representation, faint and inadequate, it is true, but still a representation, of the dominion of God over the earth. The wisdom of resting the duty of submission on this ground is obvious. The possession of office forms a plain and palpable distinction, liable to no

ambiguity or dispute. Personal merits, on the contrary, are easily contested, so that if the obligation of obedience were founded on these, it would have no kind of force, nor retain any sort of hold on the conscience; the bonds of social order might be dissolved by an epigram or a song. The more liberal sentiments of respect for institutions being destroyed, nothing would remain to insure tranquillity, but a servile fear of men. In the absence of those sentiments, as the mildest exertion of authority would be felt as an injury, authority would soon cease to be mild; and princes would have no alternative but that of governing their subjects with the severe jealousy of a master over slaves impatient of revolt: so narrow is the boundary which separates a licentious freedom from a ferocious tyranny! How incomparably more noble, salutary, and just, are the maxims the apostles lay down on this subject. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God: whosoever resisteth, therefore, the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.* We shall do well to guard against any system which would withdraw the duties we owe to our rulers and to society from the jurisdiction of conscience; that principle of the mind, whose prerogative it is to prescribe to every other, and to pronounce that definitive sentence from which there is no appeal. A good man is accustomed to acquiesce in the idea of his duties as an ultimate object, without inquiring at every step why he should perform them, or amusing himself with imagining cases and situations in which they would be liable to limitations and exceptions. Instead of being curious after these (for I do not deny that such exceptions exist), let the great general duty of submission to civil authority be engraven on our hearts, wrought into the very habit of the mind, and make a part of our elementary morality.

At this season especially, when unanimity is so requisite, every endeavour to excite discontent, by reviling the character, or depreciating the talents, of those who are entrusted

with the administration, is highly criminal. Without suspicion of flattery, we may be permitted to add, that their zeal in the service of their country cannot be questioned; that the vast preparations they have made for our defence claim our gratitude; and that if, in a situation so arduous, and in the management of affairs so complicated and difficult, they have committed mistakes, they are amply entitled to a candid construction of their measures.

Having been detained by these reflections somewhat longer than was intended, it is high time to return to those religious considerations which are more immediately appropriate to the present season. I therefore proceed to add,

4. That they appear to entertain mistaken sentiments, who rely with too much confidence for success on our supposed superiority in virtue to our enemies. Such a confidence betrays inattention to the actual conduct of Providence. Wherever there is conscious guilt, there is room to apprehend punishment; nor is it for the criminal to decide where the merited punishment shall first fall. The cup of divine displeasure is, indeed, presented successively to guilty nations, but it by no means invariably begins with those who have run the greatest career in guilt. On the contrary, *judgment* often *begins at the house of God;* and he frequently chastises his servants with severity before he proceeds to the destruction of his enemies. He assured Abraham, his seed should be afflicted in Egypt for four hundred years, and that after their expiration, *the nation that afflicted them he would judge.* The Assyrian monarchs, blind and impious idolaters, were permitted for a long period to oppress his chosen people; after which, to use his own words, *he punished the fruit of the proud heart of the king of Babylon;* and having accomplished his design in their correction, cast the rod into the fire. His conduct, on such occasions, resembles that of a parent, who, full of solicitude for the welfare of his children, animadverts upon faults in *them*, which he suffers to pass without notice in persons for whom he is less interested. Let us adore both the goodness and severity of God. The punishments which are designed to amend, are inflicted with comparative vigilance and speed; those which are meant to destroy are usually long suspended, while the devoted victims pass on with seeming impunity.

But, independent of this consideration, that superiority in virtue which is claimed may be neither so great, nor so certain, as we are ready at first to suppose. To decide on the comparative guilt of two individuals, much more of two nations, demands a more comprehensive knowledge of circumstances than we are usually able to obtain. To settle a question of this sort, it is not enough barely to inspect the manners of each; for the quality of actions, considered in themselves, is one thing; and the comparative guilt of the persons to whom they belong, is another. Before we can determine such a question, it is necessary to weigh and estimate the complicated influences to which they are exposed, the tendency of all their institutions, their respective degrees of information, and the comparative advantages and disadvantages under which they are placed. And who is equal to such a survey but the Supreme Judge, to whom it belongs to decide on the character both of nations and individuals?

Our enemies, it is true, in the moments of anarchy and madness, treated the religion of Jesus with an ostentation of insult; but it was not till that religion had been disguised, and almost concealed from their view under a veil of falsehoods and impostures. The religion they rejected, debased by foreign infusions, mingled with absurd tenets, trifling superstitions, and cruel maxims, retained scarce any traces of the *truth as it is in Jesus*. The best of men were compelled to flee their country to avoid its persecuting fury, while the *souls under the altar* were employed day and night in accusing it before God. Religious inquiry was suppressed, the perusal of the word of God discountenanced, or rather prohibited, and that book, to loose whose seals the Lamb condescended to be slain, impiously closed by those who styled themselves its ministers. In this situation, it is less surprising if the body of the people,* misled by pretended philosophers, lost sight of the feeble glimmerings of light which shone in the midst of so much obscurity. How far these considerations may extenuate, before the Searcher of hearts, the guilt of our enemies, it remains with him to determine.

* The author begs this remark may be understood to apply to the French people only, and not by any means to their infidel leaders. Of the infidelity of the latter there needs no other solution than the Scripture one: *They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

It is certain, our guilt is accompanied with no such extenuation. With us the darkness has long been past, and the true light has arisen upon us. We have long possessed the clearest display of divine truth, together with the fullest liberty of conscience. The mysteries of the Gospel have been unveiled, and its sanctifying truths pressed on the conscience by those *who, having received such a ministry,* know it to be their duty *to use great plainness of speech.*

The language of invective, it is acknowledged, should be as carefully avoided in dispensing the word of God as that of adulation; but may we not, without reprehension, ask whether it is not a melancholy truth, that many of us have continued in the midst of all this light, unchanged and impenitent; that if our enemies, with frantic impiety, renounced the forms of religion, we remain destitute of the power; and that, if they abandoned the Christian name, the name is nearly the whole of Christianity to which we can pretend? Still we are ready perhaps to exclaim, with the people of Israel in the context, *We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us!* Let us hear the prophet's reply. *Surely in vain hath he made it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.* That law is most emphatically in vain, which is the subject of boast without being obeyed. That dispensation of religion, however perfect, is in vain, which cherishes the pride, without reforming the manners of a people. Were we, indeed, a religious people, were the traces of Christianity as visible in our lives as they are in our creeds and confessions, we might derive solid support from the comparison of ourselves with others; but if the contrary be the fact, and *there are with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God,* it will be our wisdom to relinquish this plea; and instead of boasting our superior virtue, to lie low in humiliation and repentance.

5. General lamentations and acknowledgments of the corruptions of the age, be they ever so well founded, fall very short of the real duties of this season.—It is not difficult, however painful to a good mind, to descant on the luxury, the venality, the impiety of the age, the irreligion of the rich, the immorality of the poor, and the general forgetfulness of God which pervades all classes. Such topics it would be utterly improper to exclude: but to dwell on these alone, answers very little purpose. The sentiments they excite are

too vague and indistinct to make a lasting impression. To invest ourselves with an imaginary character, to represent the nation to which we belong, and combining into one group the vices of the times, to utter loud lamentations, or violent invectives, is an easy task.

But this, whatever it be, is not repentance. After bewailing in this manner the sins of others, it is possible to continue quite unconcerned about our own. He who has been thus employed may have been merely acting a part; uttering confessions in which he never meant to take a personal share. He would be mortally offended, perhaps, to have it suspected that he himself had been guilty of any one of the sins he has been deploring, or that he had contributed in the smallest degree to draw down the judgments he so solemnly deprecates. All has been transacted under a feigned character. Instead of *repenting himself of his iniquity, or saying, What have I done?* he secretly prides himself on his exemption from the general stain; and all the advantage he derives from his humiliations and confessions, is to become more deeply enamoured of the perfections of what he supposes his real character. To such I would say, you are under a dangerous delusion; and the manner in which you perform the duties of this season completes that delusion. Your repentance, your feigned, your theatrical repentance, tends to fix you in impenitence, and your humiliation to make you proud. Whatever opinion you may entertain of the character of others, your chief concern is at home. When you have broken off your own sins by righteousness, you may, with a more perfect propriety, deplore the sins of the nation; you may intercede for it in your prayers, and, within the limits of your sphere, edify it by your example; but till you have taken this first, this necessary step, you have done nothing; and should the whole nation follow your example, and copy the spirit of your devotion, we should, after all, remain an impenitent, and finally a ruined people.

Allow me here, though it may be a digression, to endeavour the correction of a mistake, which appears to me to have greatly perplexed, as well as abridged, the duties of similar seasons to the present. The mistake to which I allude respects the true idea of *national sin.* Many seem to take it for granted that nothing can justly be deemed a *national sin,*

but what has the sanction of the legislature, or is committed under public authority. When they hear, therefore, of national sins, they instantly revolve in their minds something which they apprehend to be criminal in the conduct of public affairs. That iniquity when established by law is more conspicuous, that it tends to a more general corruption, and by poisoning the streams of justice at their source, produces more extensive mischief than under any other circumstances, it is impossible to deny. In a country, moreover, where the people have a voice in the government, the corruption of their laws must first have inhered, and become inveterate in their manners.

Such corruption is therefore not so much an *instance* as a *monument* of national degeneracy; but it by no means follows that this is the only just idea of national sins. National sins are the sins of the nation. The system which teaches us to consider a people as acting merely through the medium of its prince or legislature, however useful or necessary to adjust the intercourse of nations with each other, is too technical, too artificial, too much of a compromise with the imperfection essential to human affairs, to enter into the views, or regulate the conduct, of the Supreme Being. He sees things as they are; and as the greater part of the crimes committed in every country are perpetrated by its inhabitants in their individual character, it is these, though not to the exclusion of others, which chiefly provoke the divine judgments.

To consider national sins as merely comprehending the vices of rulers, or the iniquities tolerated by law, is to place the duties of such a season as this in a very *invidious* and a very *inadequate* light. It is to render them invidious: for upon this principle our chief business on such occasions is, to single out for attack those whom we are commanded to obey, to descant on public abuses, and to hold up to detestation and abhorrence the supposed delinquencies of the government under which we are placed. How far such a conduct tends to promote that broken and contrite heart which is Heaven's best sacrifice, it requires no great sagacity to discover.

It is, moreover, to exhibit a most *inadequate* view of the duties of this season. It confines humiliation and confession to a mere scantling of the sins which pollute a nation. Under the worst governments (to say nothing of our own) the chief

perversions of right are not found in courts of justice, nor the chief outrages on virtue in the laws, nor the greatest number of atrocities in the public administration. Civil government, the great antidote which the wisdom of man has applied to the crimes and disorders that spring up in society, can scarcely ever become, in no free country at least is it possible for it to become, *itself* the chief crime and disorder. It may, on occasion, prescribe *particular things* tha are wrong, and sometimes reward where it ought to punish: but unless it bent its force for the most part to the encouragement of virtue and the suppression of vice; unless the general spirit of its laws were in unison with the dictates of conscience; it would soon fall to pieces from intestine weakness and disorder.

A last appeal, in all moral questions, lies to the Scriptures, where you will invariably find the prophets, in their boldest paintings of national vice, in their severest denunciations of divine anger, are so far from confining their representation to the conduct of rulers, that they are seldom mentioned in comparison of the people. Their attention is chiefly occupied in depicting the corruptions which prevailed in the several classes of the community, among which the crimes of princes and judges are most severely reprehended, not as representatives, but as parts of the whole. They knew nothing of that refinement by which a people are at liberty to transfer their vices to their rulers. To confirm this remark, by adducing all the instances the prophecies afford, would be to quote a great part of the Old Testament: it is sufficient to refer you to the twenty-second chapter of Ezekiel, where, after portraying the manners of the age with the peculiar vehemence of style which distinguished that holy prophet, he closes his description with these remarkable words: *And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.*

Let us not deceive ourselves with vain words. The just displeasure of God, as it will by no means spare the great, when they are criminal and impenitent, so neither is it excited by their wickedness alone. It is a fire supplied from innumerable sources, to which every crime contributes its quota; and which every portion of guilt, wherever it is found, causes to burn with augmented violence.

Having thus endeavoured to expose those grounds of confidence which appear replete with danger, it will not be necessary to dwell long on the remaining part of the subject. To be aware of the several wrong paths into which we are liable to be misled, is the principal requisite to the finding out that which is alone the true and right one.

The first duty to which our situation summons us, is a devout acknowledgment of the hand of God. To this, whatever be the instruments employed, religion instructs us ultimately to refer national calamities as well as national blessings. *That the Lord reigns*, is one of those truths which lie at the very basis of piety; nor is there any more consoling. It fills the heart, under a right impression of it, with a cheerful hope, and unruffled tranquillity, amidst the changes and trials of life, which we shall look for in vain from any other quarter. It is this chiefly which formed and distinguished the character of those who are emphatically said to have *walked with God*. Important as this disposition is, under all circumstances, it is what more especially suits the present crisis, and which the events we have witnessed are so eminently calculated to impress. The Psalmist accounts for the wicked's refusing to seek after God, from their having no changes; and certainly an uninterrupted series of prosperity is not favourable to piety. But if *we* forget God, we cannot plead even this slight extenuation; for the times that are *passing over us*, in the solemn phrase of Scripture, are eventful beyond all former example or conception. The fearful catastrophes, the strange vicissitudes, the sudden revolutions of fortune, which, thinly scattered heretofore over a long tract of ages, poets and historians have collected, and exhibited to the terror and the commiseration of mankind, have crowded upon us with so strange a rapidity, and thickened so fast, that they have become perfectly familiar, and are almost numbered among ordinary events. Astonishment has exhausted itself: and whatever occurs, we cease to be surprised. In short, everything around us, in the course of a few years, is so changed, that did not the stability of the material form a contrast to the fluctuations of the moral and political world, we might be tempted to suppose we had been removed to another state, or that all those things that have happened were but the illusions of fancy, and the visions of the night. How consoling, at such a season, to look up to that Being, *who is a very present help in trouble, the*

dwelling-place of all generations; who changes all things, and is himself unchanged! And, independent of its impiety, how cruel is that philosophy which, under pretence of superior illumination, by depriving us of this resource, would leave us exposed to the tossings of a tempestuous ocean, without compass, without solace, and without hope!

But besides this acknowledgment of the general administration of the Deity, it behoves us to feel and confess, in national calamities, the tokens of his displeasure. The evils which overtake nations are the just judgments of the Almighty. I am perfectly aware of the disadvantages under which we labour, when we insist on this topic, from its being so trite and familiar. Instead of troubling you with a general, and, I fear, unavailing descant on the manners of the age, I shall, therefore, content myself with calling your attention to a very few of what appear to me the most alarming symptoms of national degeneracy. Here we shall not insist so much on the progress of infidelity (though much to be deplored), as on an evil to which, if we are not greatly mistaken, that progress is chiefly to be ascribed: I mean a gradual departure from the peculiar truths, maxims, and spirit of Christianity. Christianity, issuing perfect and entire from the hands of its Author, will admit of no mutilations nor improvements; it stands most secure on its own basis; and without being indebted to foreign aids, supports itself best by its own internal vigour. When, under the pretence of simplifying it, we attempt to force it into a closer alliance with the most approved systems of philosophy, we are sure to contract its bounds, and to diminish its force and authority over the consciences of men. It is dogmatic; not capable of being advanced with the progress of science, but fixed and immutable. We may not be able to perceive the use or necessity of some of its discoveries, but they are not on this account the less binding on our faith; just as there are many parts of nature,* whose purposes we are

* "We ought not (says the great Bacon) to attempt to draw down or submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but, on the contrary, to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth. In this part of knowledge, touching divine philosophy, I am so far from noting any deficiency, that I rather note an excess; whereto I have digressed, because of the extreme prejudice which both religion and philosophy have received from being *commixed together*, as that which undoubtedly will make an heretical religion and a fabulous philosophy."

This

at a loss to explore, of which if any person were bold enough to arraign the propriety, it would be sufficient to reply that God made them. They are both equally the works of God, and both equally partake of the mysteriousness of their Author. This *integrity* of the Christian faith has been insensibly impaired; and the simplicity of mind with which it should be embraced, gradually diminished. While the outworks of the sanctuary have been defended with the utmost ability, its interior has been too much neglected, and the fire upon the altar suffered to languish and decay. The truths and mysteries which distinguished the Christian from all other religions, have been little attended to by some, totally denied by others; and while infinite efforts have been made, by the utmost subtlety of argumentation, to establish the truth and authenticity of revelation, few have been exerted in comparison to show what it really contains. The doctrines of the fall and of redemption, which are the two grand points on which the Christian dispensation hinges, have been too much neglected. Though it has not yet become the fashion (God forbid it ever should!) to deny them, we have been too much accustomed to confine the mention of them to oblique hints, and distant allusions. They are too often reluctantly conceded rather than warmly inculcated, as though they were the weaker or less honourable parts of Christianity, from which we were in haste to turn away our eyes, although it is in reality these very truths which have in every age inspired the devotion of the church, and the rapture of the redeemed. This alienation from the distinguishing truths of our holy religion accounts for a portentous peculiarity among Christians, their being ashamed of a book which they profess to receive as the word of God. The votaries of all other religions regard their supposed sacred books with a devotion which consecrates their errors, and makes their very absurdities venerable in their eyes. They glory in that which is their shame: we are ashamed of that which is our glory. Indifference and inattention to the truths and mysteries of revelation, have led, by an easy transition, to a dislike and neglect of the book which

This observation appears to me to deserve the most profound meditation; and lest the remarks on this subject should appear presumptuous from so inconsiderable a person, I thought it requisite to fortify myself by so great an authority.

contains them; so that, in a Christian country, nothing is thought so vulgar as a serious appeal to the Scriptures; and the candidate for fashionable distinction would rather betray a familiar acquaintance with the most impure writers, than with the words of Christ and his apostles. Yet we complain of the growth of infidelity, when nothing less could be expected than that some should declare themselves infidels, where so many had completely forgot they were Christians. They who sow the seed can with very ill grace complain of the abundance of the crop; and when we have ourselves ceased to abide in the words and maintain the honour of the Saviour, we must not be surprised at seeing some advance a step further by openly declaring they are none of his. The consequence has been such as might be expected,—an increase of profaneness, immorality, and irreligion.

The traces of piety have been wearing out more and more, from our conversation, from our manners, from our popular publications, from the current literature of the age. In proportion as the maxims and spirit of Christianity have declined, infidelity has prevailed in their room; for infidelity is, in reality, nothing more than a noxious spawn (pardon the metaphor) bred in the stagnant marshes of corrupted Christianity.

A lax theology is the natural parent of a lax morality. The peculiar motives, accordingly, by which the inspired writers enforce their moral lessons, the love of God and the Redeemer, concern for the honour of religion, and gratitude for the inestimable benefits of the Christian redemption, have no place in the fashionable systems of moral instruction.* The motives almost exclusively urged are such as take their rise from the present state, founded on reputation, on honour, on health, or on the tendency of the things recommended to promote, under some form or other, the acquisition of worldly advantages. Thus even morality itself, by dissociating it from religion, is made to cherish the love of the world, and to bar the heart more effectually against the approaches of piety.

* If the reader wishes for a further statement and illustration of these melancholy facts, he may find it in Mr. Wilberforce's celebrated book on religion; an inestimable work, which has, perhaps, done more than any other to rouse the insensibility and augment the piety of the age.

Here I cannot forbear remarking a great change which has taken place in the whole manner of reasoning on the topics of morality and religion, from what prevailed in the last century, and, as far as my information extends, in any preceding age. This, which is an age of revolutions, has also produced a strange revolution in the method of viewing these subjects, the most important by far that can engage the attention of man. The simplicity of our ancestors, nourished by "the sincere milk of the word," rather than by the tenets of a disputatious philosophy, was content to let morality remain on the firm basis of the dictates of conscience and the will of God. They considered virtue as something *ultimate*, as bounding the mental prospect. They never supposed for a moment there was anything to which it stood merely in the relation of a *means*, or, that within the narrow confines of this momentary state anything great enough could be found to be its *end* or *object*. It never occurred to their imagination that that religion which professes to render us superior to the world, is in reality nothing more than an instrument to procure the temporal, the physical good of individuals, or of society. In their view, it had a nobler destination; it looked forward to eternity: and if ever they appeared to have assigned it any end or object beyond itself, it was a union with its Author, in the perpetual fruition of God. They arranged these things in the following order:—Religion, comprehending the love, fear, and service of the Author of our being, they placed first; social morality, founded on its dictates, confirmed by its sanctions, next; and the mere physical good of society they contemplated as subordinate to both. Every thing is now reversed. The pyramid is inverted: the first is last, and the last is first. Religion is degraded from its pre-eminence, into the mere handmaid of social morality; social morality into an instrument of advancing the welfare of society; and the world is all in all. Nor have we deviated less from the example of antiquity than from that of our pious forefathers. The philosophers of antiquity, in the absence of superior light, consulted with reverence the permanent principles of nature, the dictates of conscience, and the best feelings of the heart, which they employed all the powers of reason and eloquence to unfold to adorn, to enforce; and thereby formed a luminous commentary *on the law written on*

the heart. The virtue which they inculcated grew out of the stock of human nature: it was a warm and living virtue. It was the moral man, possessing in every limb and feature, in all its figure and movements, the harmony, dignity, and variety, which belong to the human form: an effort of unassisted nature to restore that image of God, which sin had mutilated and defaced. Imperfect, as might be expected, their morality was often erroneous; but in its great outlines it had all the stability of the human constitution, and its fundamental principles were coeval and coexistent with human nature. There could be nothing fluctuating and arbitrary in its more weighty decisions, since it appealed every moment to *the man within the breast:* it pretended to nothing more than to give voice and articulation to the inward sentiments of the heart, and conscience echoed to its oracles. This, wrought into different systems, and under various modes of illustration, was the general mode which morality exhibited from the creation of the world till our time. In this state revelation found it; and, correcting what was erroneous, supplying what was defective, and confirming what was right, by its peculiar sanctions, superadded a number of supernatural truths and holy mysteries. How is it, that on a subject on which men have thought deeply from the moment they began to think, and where, consequently, whatever is entirely and fundamentally new must be fundamentally false; how is it, that in contempt of the experience of past ages, and of all precedents human and divine, we have ventured into a perilous path which no eye has explored, no foot has trod, and have undertaken, after the lapse of six thousand years, to *manufacture* a morality of our own, to decide by a cold calculation of interest, by a ledger-book of profit and of loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, of piety to blasphemy, and of humanity and justice to treachery and blood?

In the science of morals we are taught by this system to consider nothing as yet done; we are invited to erect a fresh fabric on a fresh foundation. All the elements and sentiments which entered into the essence of virtue before, are melted down and cast into a new mould. Instead of appealing to any internal principle, everything is left to calculation, and determined by expediency. In executing this plan, the

jurisdiction of conscience is abolished, her decisions are classed with those of a superannuated judge, and the determination of moral causes is adjourned from the interior tribunal to the noisy forum of speculative debate. Everything, without exception, is made an affair of calculation, under which are comprehended, not merely the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, but even the love and adoration which the Supreme Being claims at our hands. His claims are set aside, or suffered to lie in abeyance, until it can be determined how far they can be admitted on the principles of expediency, and in what respect they may interfere with the acquisition of temporal advantages. Even here, nothing is yielded to the suggestions of conscience, nothing to the movements of the heart: all is dealt out with a sparing hand, under the stint and measure of calculation. Instead of being allowed to "love God with all our heart, and all our strength, the first and great commandment," the portion of love assigned him is weighed out with the utmost scrupulosity, and the supposed excess more severely censured than the real deficiency.

Thus, by a strange inversion, the *indirect influence* of Christianity, in promoting the temporal good of mankind, is mistaken for its *principal end;* the skirts of her robe are confounded with her body, and the *powers of the world to come*, instead of raising our thoughts and contemplations from earth to heaven, from the creature to the Creator, are made subservient to the advancement of secular interests and passions. How far these sentiments accord with the dictates of inspiration, the most unlettered Christian may easily decide. *Love not the world*, said the disciple who leaned on the breast of his Lord, *neither the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* Such was the idea entertained by an inspired apostle of Christian virtue. Let us now turn to the modern philosopher. Virtue, he will inform us (including the whole sum of our duties), is merely an expedient for promoting the interests and advantages of the present world; of that world, which, in the eyes of John, was passing away, and whose value he so solemnly depreciates. What admirable consistency! What elevated theology! If

we can suppose this holy apostle acquainted with what passes on earth, what pleasure it must afford his glorified spirit, to find his sentiments so well understood, and so faithfully interpreted!

In former times it was supposed that one of the most effectual means of improvement in virtue was, the moral culture of the heart; and *to keep it with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life*, was thought an advice deserving the most serious attention. To examine frequently the state of the conscience, and to check the first risings of disorder there, was judged to be of the last importance.

It is easy to see how this moral discipline must fare under the doctrine of expediency, a doctrine which teaches man to be looking continually abroad: a doctrine which not only justifies, but enjoins, a distrust of the suggestions of the inward monitor; which will not permit the best feelings of the heart, its clearest dictates, its finest emotions, to have the smallest influence over the conduct; and, instead of yielding anything to their direction, cites them at its bar.

As this fashion of reducing every moral question to a calculation of expedience is a most important innovation, it would be strange if it had not produced a change in the manners of society. In fact, it *has* produced an entirely new cast of character, equally remote from the licentious gaiety of high life, and the low profligacy which falls under the lash of the law: a race of men distinguished by a calm and terrible ferocity, resembling Cæsar in this only, that as it was said of him, they have come with sobriety to the ruin of their country. The greatest crimes no longer issue from the strongest passions, but from the coolest head. Vice and impiety have made a new conquest, and have added the regions of speculation to their dominion. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness have put on the cloak of the philosopher: maxims the most licentious have found their way into books of pretended morality, and have been inculcated with the airs of a moral sage.* The new doctrine having withdrawn the attention from all internal sentiments, as well as destroyed their authority, the distinction between

* The unholy speculations of Mr. Godwin were founded entirely on this basis.

right and wrong was easily lost sight of, the boundaries of vice and virtue confounded, and the whole substance of morals fell a prey to contending disputants. Nor is this the only or the worst consequence which has followed. A callous indifference to all moral distinctions is an almost inseparable effect of the familiar application of this theory. Virtue is no longer contemplated as the object of any particular *sentiment* or *feeling*, but solely with regard to its effects on society: it is what it *produces*, not what *it is*, that is alone considered, just as an accountant is indifferent to the *shape* and *appearance* of the figures, and attends simply to their amount. Crimes and virtues are equally *candidates* for approbation, nor must the heart betray the least preference, which would be to prejudge the cause; but must maintain a sacred neutrality, till Expedience, whose hand never trembles in the midst of the greatest horrors, has weighed in her impartial balance their consequences and effects. In the meantime, they are equally *candidates*, we assert it again, for our approbation, and equally entitled to it, provided the passions can be deceived into an opinion, and this is not difficult, that they will come to the same thing at the foot of the account. Hence that intrepidity in guilt, which has cased the hearts of the greatest adepts in this system, as with triple brass. Its seeds were sown by some of these with an unsparing hand in France, a congenial soil, where they produced a thick vegetation. The consequences were soon felt. The fabric of society tottered to its base, the earth shook under their feet; the heavens were involved in darkness, and a voice more audible than thunder called upon them to desist. But, unmoved amidst the uproar of elements, undismayed by that voice which astonishes nature and appals the guilty, these men continued absorbed in their calculations. Instead of revering the judgments, or confessing the finger of God, they only made more haste (still on the principle of expediency) to desolate his works, and destroy his image, as if they were apprehensive the shades of a premature night might fall and cover their victims!

But it is time to conclude this discussion, which has, perhaps, already fatigued by its length. I cannot help expressing my apprehension, that this desecration of virtue, this incessant domination of physical over moral ideas, of ideas of

expedience over those of right, having already dethroned religion, and displaced virtue from her ancient basis, will, if it is suffered to proceed, ere long shake the foundation of states, and endanger the existence of the civilized world. Should it ever become popular; should it ever descend from speculation into common life, and become the practical morality of the age, we may apply to such a period the awful words of Balaam; *Who shall live when God doth this?* No imagination can portray, no mind can grasp its horrors; nor, when the angel in the Apocalypse, to whom the keys are intrusted, shall be commissioned to open the bottomless pit, will it send forth a thicker cloud of pestilential vapour. If the apparent simplicity of this system be alleged in its favour, I would say, it is the simplicity of meanness, a simplicity which is its shame, a daylight which reveals its beggary. If an air of obscurity, on the contrary, is objected against that of better times, let it be remembered that every science has its *ultimate questions*, boundaries which cannot be passed; and that if these occur earlier in morals than in other inquiries, it is the natural result of the immensity of the subject, which touching human nature in every point, and surrounding it on all sides, renders it difficult, or rather impossible, to trace it in all its relations, and view it in all its extent. Meanwhile, the shades which envelope, and will perhaps always envelope it in some measure, are not without their use, since they teach the two most important lessons we can learn,—the vanity of our reason, and the grandeur of our destiny.

It is not improbable some may be offended at the warmth and freedom of these remarks: my apology, however, rests on the infinite importance of the subject, my extreme solicitude to impress what appear to me right sentiments respecting it, together with the consideration, that the confidence which ill becomes the innovators of yesterday, however able, may be pardoned in the defenders, however weak, of a system which has stood the test and sustained the virtue of two thousand years.* Let us return, then, to the safe and sober paths of

* The system which founds morality on utility, an utility, let it be *always* remembered, confined to the purposes of the present world, issued with ill omen from the school of infidelity. It was first broached, I believe, certainly first brought into general notice, by Mr. Hume, in his

our ancestors; adhering, in all moral questions, to the dictates of conscience, regulated and informed by the divine word; happy to enjoy, instead of sparks of our own kindling, the benefit of those luminaries which, placed in the moral firmament by a potent hand, have guided the church from the beginning, in her mysterious sojourn to eternity. *Stand in the way, and see; and ask for the old path, which is the good way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

Instead of demolishing the temple of Christian virtue, from a presumptuous curiosity to inspect its foundations, let us rejoice that they are laid too deep for our scrutiny. Let us *worship* in it; and, along with the *nations of them that are saved, walk in its light.*

Having endeavoured to point out the source of our degeneracy, in a departure from the doctrines and spirit of Christianity, I hasten to despatch the remainder of this discourse; nor will it detain you long.

Treatise on Morals, which he himself pronounced *incomparably the best* he ever wrote. It was incomparably the best for his purpose; nor is it easy to imagine a mind so acute as his did not see the effect it would have in setting morality and religion afloat, and substituting for the stability of principle the looseness of speculation and opinion. It has since been rendered popular by a succession of eminent writers; by one especially (I doubt not with intentions very foreign from those of Mr. Hume), whose great services to religion in other respects, together with my high reverence for his talents, prevent me from naming him. This venerable author, it is probable, little suspected to what lengths the principle would be carried, or to what purposes it would be applied in other hands. Had he foreseen this, I cannot but imagine he would have spared this part of his acute speculations.

We have, happily, preserved to us from antiquity two complete Treatises on Morals, in which the authors profess to give us a complete view of our duties; the one composed by the greatest master of reason, the other of eloquence, the world ever saw. The first of these has distinguished, classified, and arranged the elements of *social morality*, which is all he could reach in the absence of revelation, with that acuteness, subtlety, and precision, for which he was so eminently distinguished. Whoever attentively peruses his Treatise, the Nicomachian Morals I mean, will find a perpetual reference to the inward sentiments of the breast. He builds everything on the human constitution. He all along takes it for granted that there is a moral impress on the mind to which, without looking abroad, we may safely appeal. In a word, Aristotle never lost the moralist in the accountant. He has been styled the interpreter of Nature, and has certainly shown himself a most able commentator on the *law written on the heart.* For Cicero, in all his philosophical

Whoever has paid attention to the manners of the day, must have perceived a remarkable innovation in the use of moral terms, in which we have receded more and more from the spirit of Christianity. Of this the term employed to denote a lofty sentiment of personal superiority supplies an obvious instance. In the current language of the times, *pride* is scarcely ever used but in a favourable sense. It will, perhaps, be thought the mere change of a term is of little consequence; but be it remembered that any remarkable innovation in the use of moral terms betrays a proportionable change in the ideas and feelings they are intended to denote. As pride has been transferred from the list of vices to that of virtues, so humility, as a natural consequence, has been excluded, and is rarely suffered to enter into the praise of a character we wish to commend; although it was the leading feature in that of the Saviour of the world, and is still the leading characteristic of his religion; while there is no vice, on the contrary, against which the denunciations are so frequent as pride. Our conduct in this instance is certainly rather extraordinary, both in what we have embraced, and in what we have rejected; and it will surely be confessed, we are somewhat unfortunate in having selected that vice as a

works, as well as in his Offices, where he treats more directly on these subjects, he shows the most extreme solicitude, as though he had a prophetic glance of what was to happen, to keep the moral and natural world apart, to assert the supremacy of virtue, and to recognise those sentiments and vestiges from which he educes, with the utmost elevation, the *contempt of human things*. How humiliating the consideration that, with superior advantages, our moral systems should be infinitely surpassed in warmth and grandeur by those of pagan times; and that the most jejune and comfortless that ever entered the mind of man, and the most abhorrent from the spirit of religion, should have ever become popular in a Christian country! This departure from the precedents of antiquity will not, by those who are capable of forming a judgment, be easily imputed to the superiority of our talents; it is rather the result of that tendency to *degradation* which has long marked our progress. Along with the simplicity of faith and a reverence for the Scriptures, our respect for the dignity (rightly understood) of human nature, and tenderness for its best interests, have been gradually impaired. A fearlessness of consequences, a hardihood of mind, a disposition to sacrifice everything to originality, or to a pretended philosophical precision, have succeeded in their place. This, in my humble opinion, has been the great bane of modern speculation, and has rendered so much of it wild, ferocious, and destructive.

particular object of approbation, which God had already selected as the especial mark at which he aims the thunderbolts of his vengeance.

Another symptom of degeneracy appears in the growing disregard to the external duties of religion; the duties more especially of the Lord's-day, and of public worship. It is supposed by such as have the best means of information, that throughout the kingdom, the number who regularly assemble for worship is far inferior to those who neglect it; that in our great towns and cities they are not one-fourth of the people, and in the metropolis a much smaller proportion. It is easy to foresee how the leisure afforded by the Christian Sabbath will be employed by those who utterly forget the design of its institution. It is somewhat remarkable that here the extremes meet, and that the public duties of religion are most slighted by the highest and the lowest classes of society; by the former, I fear, from indolence and pride; by the latter, from ignorance and profligacy.

Too many of the first description, when they do attend, it is in such a manner as makes it evident they esteem it merely an act of condescension, to which they submit as an example to their inferiors, who, penetrating their design, and imitating their indifference rather than their devotion, are disgusted with a religion which they perceive has no hold on their superiors, and is only imposed upon themselves as a badge of inferiority and a muzzle of restraint. Could the rich and noble be prevailed upon for a moment to attend to the instructions of their Lord, instead of making their elevated rank a reason for neglecting these duties, they would learn that there are none to whom they are so necessary; since there are none whose situation is so perilous, whose responsibility is so great, and whose salvation is so arduous.

Here fidelity compels me to advert to a circumstance, which I mention with sincere reluctance, because it implies something like a censure on the conduct of those whom it is our duty to respect. You are, probably, aware I mean the assigning part of the Sunday to *military exercises*. When we consider how important an institution the Christian Sabbath is, how essential to the maintenance of public worship, which is itself essential to religion, and what a barrier it opposes to the impiety and immorality of the age; is it not to be la-

mented that it should ever have been, in the smallest degree, infringed by legislative authority? The rest of the Sabbath had been already too much violated, its duties too much neglected; but this is the first instance of the violation of it being publicly recommended and enjoined,* at a time too when we are engaged with an enemy whose very name conveys a warning against impiety. Our places of worship have been thinned by the absence of those who have been employed in military evolutions, and of a still greater number of gazers, whom such spectacles attract. Nor is the time lost from religious duties so much to be considered, as that tumult and hurry of mind, utterly incompatible with devotion, which are inseparable from military ideas and preparations. Surely it could never have been the intention of the Legislature, though such has been the effect, to detach the defenders of their country from the worshippers of God: nor is it to be supposed they adverted to the influence which a precedent of such high authority must have in divesting the Sabbath of its sanctity in the eyes of the people, and of establishing the fatal epoch whence it was no longer to be revered as the ordinance of heaven. They had, we believe, no such intention; but the innocence of the intention abates nothing of the mischief of the precedent.

As it is foreign from my purpose to make a complete enumeration of national sins, which would not only be a most painful task in itself, but quite incompatible with the limits of this discourse, I shall content myself with the mention of one more proof of the degeneracy of our manners. This proof is found in that almost universal profaneness which taints our daily intercourse, and which has risen to such a height as to have become a melancholy characteristic of our country. In no nation under heaven, probably, has the profanation of sacred terms been so prevalent as in this Christian land. The name even of the Supreme Being himself, and the words he has employed to denounce the punishments of the impenitent, are rarely mentioned but in anger or in sport; so that were a stranger to our history to witness

* The Book of Sports, in the reign of James the First, is not an exception, as that, though sufficiently censurable, was not considered as a violation of the Sabbath, considered as a day of *rest*.

the style of our conversation, he would naturally infer we considered religion as a detected imposture; and that nothing more remained than, in return for the fears it had inspired, to treat it with the insult and derision due to a fallen tyrant. It is difficult to account for a practice which gratifies no passion, and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear, which tempts men to make bold with their Maker. If there are hypocrites in religion, there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety, men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. It may not be improper to remind such as indulge this practice, that they need not insult their Maker to show that they do not fear him; that they may relinquish this vice without danger of being supposed to be devout, and that they may safely leave it to other parts of their conduct to efface the smallest suspicion of their piety. To view this practice in the most favourable light, it indicates, as has been observed by a great living writer,* "a mind over which religious considerations have little influence." It also sufficiently accounts for that propensity to ridicule piety, which is one of our national peculiarities. It would be uncandid to suppose, that at the best times there was more piety on the continent than here: be this as it may, it never appears to have exposed its possessors to contempt; nor was the sublime devotion of Fenelon and of Pascal ever considered as forming a shade to their genius. The reverence for religion had not been worn away by the familiar abuse of its peculiar terms.

It will be expected something should be said on the *slave-trade.* Its enormity no words can express. But here we must feel a mixture of satisfaction and regret; of satisfaction, at finding it has excited such general indignation among the people; of regret, that notwithstanding this, it should still be continued. By the most earnest and unanimous remonstrances, addressed to those who alone could abolish it, the people have purged themselves from this contamination.

* Dr. Paley.

Their application was unsuccessful. The guilt and turpitude of this traffic now rest upon the heads of those who sanction, and of those who conduct it. From some recent events in the western colonies, it seems not unlikely the Deity is about to take this affair into his own hands, and to accomplish by his interposition what has been denied to the prayer of the nation.

It is far from being a pleasing employ; it is painful, it is distressing, to dwell on such topics; but it is necessary. Our disease has gone too far to admit of palliatives; our wounds are too deep to be healed, till they are searched and probed to the bottom. The only safe expedient which remains to be adopted, is an immediate return to God; *to forsake every one his evil way, and the violence that is in his hands, and cry mightily to him: and who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away his fierce anger from us?* At the same time, let it be remembered, that repentance is a personal concern. Instead of losing ourselves in a crowd, and resting in general confessions, we ought each one to examine his own ways, and turn from his own iniquity. We shall not fail, if we have the least piety, to lament the prevalence of sin around us, but we can repent only *of our own:* and however, in the present mixed and imperfect state, we may share in the judgments and calamities which other men's sins draw down, it is those we commit ourselves which alone can do us ultimate injury. Our continuance here is but for a short time; after which, as many as are *purified and made white* will remove into another world, be placed under a higher economy, and be put in possession of *a kingdom that cannot be moved.*

Let me remind you that repentance is a duty of greater extent than many are apt to suppose, who, confining their view, on such occasions as these, to a few of the grosser disorders of their lives, pay little attention to the heart: they are satisfied with feeling a momentary compunction, and attempting a partial reformation, instead of crying with the royal penitent, *create in me a clean heart!* They determine to break off particular vices,—an excellent resolution as far as it goes,—without proposing to themselves a life of habitual devotion, without imploring, under a sense of weakness, that grace which can alone renew the heart, making, in the words of our Lord, the tree good, that the fruit may be good also.

Let it cost us what uneasiness it may, let us resolve, at the present season, to examine our ways, to become acquainted with the state of our consciences, to enter with "the candle of the Lord" into the inmost recesses of the heart, and the *chambers of imagery*, whatever disorder or defilement they may conceal, or whatever alarm the knowledge of ourselves may excite; since to be apprised of danger is the first step to safety, and it will be infinitely better for us to judge and accuse ourselves now, than to be judged and condemned hereafter. Happy those to whom a seasonable alarm shall suggest the means of a perpetual security. We need be under no apprehension, lest the cherishing of the sentiments we have recommended should lead to despondency. We have a High-Priest, *who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.* In the midst of the deepest humiliation, we are invited to look up to him, with a humble reliance on the efficacy of his blood which cleanses from all sin; and to intrust our prayers and our duties, disordered and imperfect at best, into his hands, that he may mingle them with the incense of his intercession, and present them with acceptance before God.

When Nineveh was threatened with destruction by the prophet Jonah, tidings were brought to the king, who proclaimed a fast. Penetrated with the profoundest awe of the divine displeasure, he enjoined a rigorous abstinence from food, which extended even to the brute creation, who were also commanded to be covered with sackcloth. For in the eyes of that penitent prince it seemed proper that everything should wear an air of mourning and desolation, while it lay under the frown of its Maker. He himself *rose from his throne, laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.* He rightly judged that the glitter of state, the distinctions of rank, and the splendour of royalty should disappear at a moment when all classes were alike awaiting their doom; at a moment when the greatest as well as the least were made to feel they were potsherds of the earth, ready to be crumbled into dust. Such exemplary humiliation averted the divine anger, and Nineveh was spared. If our gracious Sovereign has (as we humbly believe) descended this day from his elevation, and laying aside his robes, humbled himself in the dust before the Majesty of heaven;

if his nobles have followed his example, and the people have resolved to *turn every one from his evil way*, the duties of the season will afford a surer defence than all our military preparations: our salvation will issue from the Being *whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.*

As a people, the most certain means of ensuring lasting prosperity, and of enabling us to transmit, unimpaired, to those who shall succeed us, the rich inheritance devolved from our fathers, will be a speedy return to the spirit and practice of the Gospel. We shall ill consult the true interests of revelation by disguising its peculiarities, in hope of conciliating the approbation of infidels, and of adapting it more to their taste—a mistaken and dangerous policy, by which we run imminent risk of catching *their* contagion, without imparting the benefit of *its* truths. Let us not for a moment blench from its mysteries: they are *mysteries of godliness;* and, however much they may surpass human reason, bear the distinct impress of a divine hand. We rejoice that they *are mysteries*, so far from being ashamed of them on that account; since the principal reason why they are, and must ever continue such, is derived from their elevation, from their *unsearchable riches*, and undefinable grandeur. In fine, let us draw our religion and morality entirely from the word of God, without seeking any deeper foundation for our duties than the *will* of the Supreme Being, an implicit and perfect acquiescence in which is the *highest virtue* a creature can attain.

Amidst many unfavourable symptoms of the state of morals amongst us, there are others of a contrary nature. We may hope infidelity has nearly run its length. In truth, its sophistry, in the eyes of men of sense, has been much discredited by the absurdity of its tenets; and if any have been in danger of being seduced by the talents of its advocates, they have commonly found a sufficient antidote in their lives. We have learned to prize revelation more than ever, since we have seen the ludicrous mistakes, as well as serious disasters, of those mystics of impiety who chose rather to walk by an internal light than enjoy the benefit of its illumination. They have edified us much without intending it: they have had the effect which the great critic of antiquity assigns as the purpose of the Tragic Muse, that of purifying the heart by pity and terror. Their zeal has excited an equal degree of ardour in

better cause, and their efforts to extirpate religion have been opposed by contrary efforts, to diffuse its influence, at home and abroad, to a degree unexampled in modern times. A growing unanimity has prevailed among the good in different parties, who, finding a centre of union in the great truths of revelation, and in a solicitude for its interests, are willing to merge their smaller differences in a common cause. The number of the sincerely pious, we trust, is increasing among us, whose zeal, so far from suffering abatement from the confidence of infidelity, has glowed with a purer and more steady flame than ever. These are pleasing indications that the presence of the *Holy One of Israel* is still in the midst of us.

How it may please the Ruler of the universe to dispose the destinies of the two most powerful nations of the earth, which are at this moment laid in the balance together, it is impossible for us with certainty to predict. But when we consider how many of his sincere worshippers, how large a portion of his church, together with how rich a fund of wisdom, of talents, and of all those elements of social order and happiness which he must approve, are enclosed within the limits of this highly-favoured land, we cannot believe he intends to give it up a prey to his enemies. Our insular situation is favourable, our resources prodigious, and the preparations which have long been making, apparently every way equal to the danger of the crisis: but still we would place our ultimate reliance on Him who abases the proud, and exalts the lowly. It would be presumption to imagine it in my power to add anything to those considerations which have already produced such a general movement in defence of our liberties. The cause speaks for itself: it excites feelings which words are ill able to express; involving every object and motive which can engage the solicitude, affect the interests, or inflame the heart of man. After a series of provocations and injuries, reciprocally sustained and retaliated, the dispute betwixt us and our enemies is brought to a short issue; it is no longer which of the two nations shall have the ascendant, but which shall continue a nation: it is a struggle for existence, not for empire. It must surely be regarded as a happy circumstance that the contest did not take this shape at an earlier period, while many were deceived by certain specious pretences of liberty into a favourable opinion of our enemies' designs. The

popular delusion is passed; the most unexampled prodigies of guilt have dispelled it; and, after a series of rapine and cruelty, have torn from every heart the last fibres of mistaken partiality. The crimes of those with whom we have to contend are legible in every part of Europe. There is scarcely a man to be found who is not most perfectly acquainted with the meaning of that freedom they profess to bestow; that it is a freedom from the dominion of laws to pass under the yoke of slavery, and from the fear of God to plunge into crimes and impiety; an impious barter of all that is good for all that is ill, through the utmost range and limits of moral destiny. Nor is it less easy to develope the character of our principal enemy. A man bred in the school of ferocity, amidst the din of arms and the tumult of camps; his element war and confusion; who has changed his religion with his uniform, and has not spared the assassination of his own troops; it is easy to foresee what treatment such a man will give to his enemies should they fall into his power; to those enemies especially, who, saved from the shipwreck of nations, are preserving as in an ark the precious remains of civilization and order; and whom, after destroying the liberties of every other country, he envies the melancholy distinction of being the only people he has not enslaved. Engaged with such an enemy, no weak hopes of moderation or clemency can tempt us for a moment to relax in our resistance to his power; and the only alternative which remains is, to conquer or to die.

Hence that unexampled unanimity which distinguishes the present season. In other wars we have been a divided people: the effect of our external operations has been in some measure weakened by intestine dissension. When peace has returned the breach has widened, while parties have been formed on the merits of particular men, or of particular measures. These have all disappeared; we have buried our mutual animosities in a regard to the common safety. The sentiment of self-preservation, the first law which nature has impressed, has absorbed every other feeling; and the fire of liberty has melted down the discordant sentiments and minds of the British empire into one mass, and propelled them in one direction. Partial interests and feelings are suspended, the spirits of the body are collected at the heart, and we are waiting with anxiety, but without dismay, the discharge of that mighty

tempest which hangs upon the skirts of the horizon, and to which the eyes of Europe and of the world are turned in silent and awful expectation. While we feel solicitude, let us not betray dejection, nor be alarmed at the past successes of our enemy, which are more dangerous to himself than to us, since they have raised him from obscurity to an elevation which has made him giddy, and tempted him to suppose every thing within his power. The intoxication of his success is the omen of his fall. What though he has carried the flames of of war throughout Europe, and *gathered as a nest the riches of the nations, while none peeped, nor muttered, nor moved the wing;* he has yet to try his fortune in another field; he has yet to contend on a soil filled with the monuments of freedom, enriched with the blood of its defenders; with a people who, animated with one soul, and inflamed with zeal for their laws and for their prince, are armed in defence of all that is dear or venerable; their wives, their parents, their children, the sanctuary of God, and the sepulchre of their fathers. We will not suppose there is one who will be deterred from exerting himself in such a cause by a pusillanimous regard to his safety, when he reflects that he has already lived too long who has survived the ruin of his country; and that he who can enjoy life after such an event, deserves not to have lived at all. It will suffice us, if our mortal existence, which is at most but a span, be co-extended with that of the nation which gave us birth. We will gladly quit the scene, with all that is noble and august, innocent and holy; and instead of wishing to survive the oppression of weakness, the violation of beauty, and the extinction of everything on which the heart can repose, welcome the shades which will hide from our view such horrors.

From the most fixed principles of human nature, as well as from the examples of all history, we may be certain the conquest of this country, should it be permitted to take place, will not terminate in any ordinary catastrophe, in any much less calamitous than utter extermination. Our present elevation will be the exact measure of our future depression, as it will measure the fears and jealousies of those who subdue us. While the smallest vestige remains of our former greatness, while any trace or memorial exists of our having been once a flourishing and independent empire, while the nation breathes,

they will be afraid of its recovering its strength, and never think themselves secure of their conquest till our navy is consumed, our wealth dissipated, our commerce extinguished, every liberal institution abolished, our nobles extirpated; whatever in rank, character, and talents gives distinction in society, called out and destroyed, and the refuse which remains swept together into a putrefying heap by the besom of destruction. The enemy will not need to proclaim his triumph; it will be felt in the more expressive silence of extended desolation.

Recollect for a moment his invasion of Egypt, a country which had never given him the slightest provocation; a country so remote from the scene of his crimes, that it probably did not know there was such a man in existence (happy ignorance, could it have lasted!); but while he was looking around him, like a vulture perched on an eminence, for objects on which he might gratify his insatiable thirst of rapine, he no sooner beheld the defenceless condition of that unhappy country, than he alighted upon it in a moment. In vain did it struggle, flap its wings, and rend the air with its shrieks; the cruel enemy, deaf to its cries, had infixed his talons, and was busy in sucking its blood, when the interference of a superior power forced him to relinquish his prey, and betake himself to flight. Will that vulture, think you, ever forget his disappointment on that occasion, or the numerous wounds, blows, and concussions he received in a ten years' struggle? It is impossible. It were folly to expect it. He meditates, no doubt, the deepest revenge. He who saw nothing in the simple manners and blood-bought liberties of the Swiss to engage his forbearance, nothing in proclaiming himself a Mahometan to revolt his conscience, nothing in the condition of defenceless prisoners to excite his pity, nor in that of the companions of his warfare, sick and wounded in a foreign land, to prevent him from despatching them by poison, will treat in a manner worthy of the impiety and inhumanity of his character, a nation which he naturally dislikes as being free, dreads as the rivals of his power, and abhors as the authors of his disgrace.

Though these are undoubted truths, and ought to be seriously considered, yet I would rather choose to appeal to sentiments more elevated than such topics can inspire. To

form an adequate idea of the duties of this crisis, it will be necessary to raise your minds to a level with your station, to extend your views to a distant futurity, and to consequences the most certain, though most remote. By a series of criminal enterprises, by the successes of guilty ambition, the liberties of Europe have been gradually extinguished; the subjugation of Holland, Switzerland, and the free towns of Germany has completed that catastrophe; and we are the only people in the eastern hemisphere who are in possession of equal laws and a free constitution. Freedom, driven from every spot on the continent, has sought an asylum in a country which she always chose for her favourite abode; but she is pursued even here, and threatened with destruction. The inundation of lawless power, after covering the whole earth, threatens to follow us here; and we are most exactly, most critically placed, in the only aperture where it can be successfully repelled, in the Thermopylæ of the universe. As far as the interests of freedom are concerned, the most important by far of sublunary interests, you, my countrymen, stand in the capacity of the federal representatives of the human race; for with you it is to determine (under God) in what condition the latest posterity shall be born; their fortunes are intrusted to your care, and on your conduct at this moment depends the colour and complexion of their destiny. If liberty, after being extinguished on the continent, is suffered to expire here, whence is it ever to emerge in the midst of that thick night that will invest it? It remains with you then to decide whether that freedom, at whose voice the kingdoms of Europe awoke from the sleep of ages, to run a career of virtuous emulation in every thing great and good; the freedom which dispelled the mists of superstition, and invited the nations to behold their God; whose magic touch kindled the rays of genius, the enthusiasm of poetry, and the flame of eloquence; the freedom which poured into our lap opulence and arts, and embellished life with innumerable institutions and improvements, till it became a theatre of wonders; it is for you to decide whether this freedom shall yet survive, or be covered with a funeral pall, and wrapt in eternal gloom. It is not necessary to await your determination. In the solicitude you feel to approve yourselves worthy of such a trust, every thought of what is afflicting in warfare, every apprehension of danger must

vanish, and you are impatient to mingle in the battles of the civilized world. Go then, ye defenders of your country,* accompanied with every auspicious omen; advance with alacrity into the field, where God himself musters the hosts to war. Religion is too much interested in your success not to lend you her aid; she will shed over this enterprise her selectest influence. While you are engaged in the field many will repair to the closet, many to the sanctuary: the faithful of every name will employ that prayer which has power with God; the feeble hands which are unequal to any other weapon will grasp the sword of the Spirit; and from myriads of humble, contrite hearts, the voice of intercession, supplication, and weeping, will mingle in its ascent to heaven with the shouts of battle and the shock of arms.

While you have everything to fear from the success of the enemy, you have every means of preventing that success, so that it is next to impossible for victory not to crown your exertions. The extent of your resources, under God, is equal to the justice of your cause. But should Providence determine otherwise, should you fall in this struggle, should the nation fall, you will have the satisfaction (the purest allotted to man) of having performed your part; your names will be enrolled with the most illustrious dead, while posterity, to the end of time, as often as they revolve the events of this period (and they will incessantly revolve them), will turn to you a reverential eye, while they mourn over the freedom which is entombed in your sepulchre. I cannot but imagine the virtuous heroes, legislators, and patriots, of every age and country, are bending from their elevated seats to witness this contest, as if they were incapable, till it be brought to a favourable issue, of enjoying their eternal repose. Enjoy that repose, illustrious immortals! Your mantle fell when you ascended; and thousands, inflamed with your spirit, and impatient to tread in your steps, are ready *to swear by Him that sitteth upon the throne, and liveth for ever and ever*, they will protect freedom in her last asylum, and never desert that cause which you sustained by your labours, and cemented with your blood. And thou, sole Ruler among the children of men, to whom the shields of the earth belong, *gird on thy*

* A company of volunteers attended public worship on this occasion. —Ed.

sword, thou Most Mighty: go forth with our hosts in the day of battle! Impart, in addition to their hereditary valour, that confidence of success which springs from thy presence! Pour into their hearts the spirit of departed heroes! Inspire them with thine own; and, while led by thine hand, and fighting under thy banners, open thou their eyes to behold in every valley and in every plain, what the prophet beheld by the same illumination—chariots of fire, and horses of fire! *Then shall the strong man be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark: and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.*

THE ADVANTAGES OF KNOWLEDGE TO THE LOWER CLASSES.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT

HERVEY LANE, LEICESTER,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF A SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

[PUBLISHED IN 1810.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

To attempt to disarm the severity of criticism by humiliation or entreaty would be a hopeless task. Waiving every apology, the author, therefore, has only to remark, that the motives of a writer must ever remain a secret, but the *tendency* of what he writes is capable of being ascertained, and is in reality the only consideration in which the public are interested. The author is concerned at an unexpected coincidence in the text betwixt this and a very excellent discourse, delivered on a similar occasion, and published by his much esteemed friend, the Rev. Francis Cox. The coincidence was entirely accidental, and the text in each instance being employed very much in the manner of a motto, it is hoped the train of thought will be found sufficiently distinct. He cannot conclude without recommending to the public, and to the young especially, the serious perusal of the above-mentioned animated and impressive discourse.

A SERMON.

PROVERBS xix. 2.

That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good.

THROUGHOUT every part of this book the author is copious, and even profuse, in the praises of knowledge. To stimulate to the acquisition of it, and to assist in the pursuit, is the professed design with which it was penned. *To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young men knowledge and discretion.*

Though it is evident from many passages, that in the encomiums to which we have referred, the author had principally in view divine knowledge, yet from other parts it is equally certain he by no means intended to exclude from these commendations knowledge in general; and as we propose this afternoon to recommend to your attention the Sabbath-day School established in this place, a few reflections on the utility of knowledge at large, and of religious knowledge in particular, will not be deemed unseasonable.

I. Let me request your attention to a few remarks on the utility of knowledge in general. It must strike us, in the first place, that the extent to which we have the faculty of acquiring it, forms the most obvious distinction of our species. In inferior animals it subsists in so small a degree, that we are wont to deny it to them altogether; the range of their knowledge, if it deserves the name, is so extremely limited, and their ideas so few and simple. Whatever is most exquisite in their operations is referred to an instinct, which, working within a narrow compass, though with undeviating uniformity, supplies the place, and supersedes the necessity, of reason. In inferior animals, the knowledge of the whole species is possessed by each individual of the species, while man is distinguished by numberless diversities in the scale of

mental improvement. Now, to be destitute, in a remarkable degree, of an acquisition which forms the appropriate possession of human nature, is degrading to that nature, and must proportionably disqualify it for reaching the end of its creation.

As the power of acquiring knowledge is to be ascribed to reason, so the attainment of it mightily strengthens and improves it, and thereby enables it to enrich itself with further acquisitions. Knowledge, in general, expands the mind, exalts the faculties, refines the taste of pleasure, and opens numerous sources of intellectual enjoyment. By means of it we become less dependent for satisfaction upon the sensitive appetites, the gross pleasures of sense are more easily despised, and we are made to feel the superiority of the spiritual to the material part of our nature. Instead of being continually solicited by the influence and irritation of sensible objects, the mind can retire within herself, and expatiate in the cool and quiet walks of contemplation. The Author of nature has wisely annexed a pleasure to the exercise of our active powers, and particularly to the pursuit of truth, which, if it be in some instances less intense, is far more durable than the gratifications of sense, and is, on that account, incomparably more valuable. Its duration, to say nothing of its other properties, renders it more valuable. It may be repeated without satiety, and pleases afresh on every reflection upon it. These are self-created satisfactions, always within our reach, not dependent upon events, not requiring a peculiar combination of circumstances to produce or maintain them; they rise from the mind itself, and inhere, so to speak, in its very substance. Let the mind but retain its proper functions, and they spring up spontaneously, unsolicited, unborrowed, and unbought. Even the difficulties and impediments which obstruct the pursuit of truth, serve, according to the economy under which we are placed, to render it more interesting. The labour of intellectual search resembles and exceeds the tumultuous pleasures of the chase; and the consciousness of overcoming a formidable obstacle, or of lighting on some happy discovery, gives all the enjoyment of a conquest, without those corroding reflections by which the latter must be impaired. Can we doubt that Archimedes, who was so absorbed in his contemplations as not to be di-

verted by the sacking of his native city, and was killed in the very act of meditating a mathematical problem, did not, when he exclaimed Ευρηκα! ευρηκα! I have found it! I have found it! feel a transport as genuine as was ever experienced after the most brilliant victory?

But to return to the moral good which results from the acquisition of knowledge: it is chiefly this, that by multiplying the mental resources, it has a tendency to exalt the character, and, in some measure, to correct and subdue the taste for gross sensuality. It enables the possessor to beguile his leisure moments (and every man has such) in an innocent, at least, if not in a useful, manner. The poor man who can read, and who possesses a taste for reading, can find entertainment at home, without being tempted to repair to the public-house for that purpose. His mind can find him employment when his body is at rest; he does not lie prostrate and float on the current of incidents, liable to be carried whithersoever the impulse of appetite may direct. There is in the mind of such a man an intellectual spring urging him to the pursuit of *mental* good; and if the minds of his family also are a little cultivated, conversation becomes the more interesting, and the sphere of domestic enjoyment enlarged. The calm satisfaction which books afford, puts him into a disposition to relish more exquisitely the tranquil delight inseparable from the indulgence of conjugal and parental affection; and as he will be more respectable in the eyes of his family than he who can teach them nothing, he will be naturally induced to cultivate whatever may preserve, and to shun whatever would impair, that respect. He who is inured to reflection will carry his views beyond the present hour; he will extend his prospect a little into futurity, and be disposed to make some provision for his approaching wants; whence will result an increased motive to industry, together with a care to husband his earnings, and to avoid unnecessary expense. The poor man who has gained a taste for good books will in all likelihood become thoughtful; and when you have given the poor a habit of thinking, you have conferred on them a much greater favour than by the gift of a large sum of money, since you have put them in possession of the *principle* of all legitimate prosperity.

I am persuaded that the extreme profligacy, improvidence,

and misery, which are so prevalent among the labouring classes in many countries, are chiefly to be ascribed to the want of education. In proof of this we need only cast our eyes on the condition of the Irish, compared with that of the peasantry in Scotland. Among the former you behold nothing but beggary, wretchedness, and sloth: in Scotland, on the contrary, under the disadvantages of a worse climate and more unproductive soil, a degree of decency and comfort, the fruit of sobriety and industry, are conspicuous among the lower classes. And to what is this disparity in their situation to be ascribed, except to the influence of education? In Ireland, the education of the poor is miserably neglected; very few of them can read, and they grow up in a total ignorance of what it most befits a rational creature to understand: while in Scotland the establishment of free schools* in every parish, an essential branch of the ecclesiastical constitution of the country, brings the means of instruction within the reach of the poorest, who are there inured to decency, industry, and order.

Some have objected to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and, by impairing the habits of subordination, endanger the tranquillity of the state; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated,

* In the 'Edinburgh Christian Instructor' for 1816, the slight mistake which occurs above, in reference to "free schools" in North Britain, is thus corrected:—"The truth is, that *free* schools could never have effected that improvement in the manners and intelligence of the lower orders in Scotland, for which they are so remarkable; and we have reason to bless the judicious liberality of our ancestors, who contented themselves with bringing education within the reach of the lower orders, by allowing limited salaries to the schoolmasters, *in aid of the school wages*, instead of going to the hurtful extreme which tends to render teachers careless and parents indifferent."—Ed.

implies a reflection on the social order, equally impolitic, invidious, and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate governments so insecure as extreme ignorance in the people. It is this which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudices and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano.

The true prop of good government is the opinion, the perception, on the part of the subject, of benefits resulting from it; a settled conviction, in other words, of its being a public good. Now nothing can produce or maintain that opinion but knowledge, since opinion is a form of knowledge. Of tyrannical and unlawful governments, indeed, the support is fear, to which ignorance is as congenial as it is abhorrent from the genius of a free people. Look at the popular insurrections and massacres in France: of what description of persons were those ruffians composed, who, breaking forth like a torrent, overwhelmed the mounds of lawful authority? Who were the cannibals that sported with the mangled carcases and palpitating limbs of their murdered victims, and dragged them about with their teeth in the gardens of the Tuileries? Were they refined and elaborated into these barbarities by the efforts of a too polished education? No; they were the very scum of the people, destitute of all moral culture, whose atrocity was only equalled by their ignorance, as might well be expected, when the one was the legitimate parent of the other. Who are the persons who, in every country, are most disposed to outrage and violence, but the most ignorant and uneducated of the poor? to which class also chiefly belong those unhappy beings who are doomed to expiate their crimes at the fatal tree; few of whom, it has recently been ascertained on accurate inquiry, are able to read, and the greater part utterly destitute of all moral or religious principle.

Ignorance gives a sort of eternity to prejudice, and perpetuity to error. When a baleful superstition, like that of the church of Rome, has once got footing among a people in this situation, it becomes next to impossible to eradicate it; for it can only be assailed with success by the weapons of reason and argument, and to these weapons it is impassive. The sword of ethereal temper loses its edge, when tried on the

scaly hide of this leviathan. No wonder the church of Rome is such a friend to ignorance; it is but paying the arrears of gratitude in which she is deeply indebted. How is it possible for her not to hate that light which would unveil her impostures, and detect her enormities?

If we survey the genius of Christianity, we shall find it to be just the reverse. It was ushered into the world with the injunction, *Go and teach all nations*, and every step of its progress is to be ascribed to instruction. With a condescension worthy of its Author, it offers information to the meanest and most illiterate; but extreme ignorance is not a state of mind favourable to it. The first churches were planted in cities (and those the most celebrated and enlightened), drawn neither from the very highest nor the very lowest classes; the former too often the victims of luxury and pride, the latter sunk in extreme stupidity; but from the middle orders, where the largest portion of virtue and good sense has usually resided. In remote villages its progress was extremely slow, owing, unquestionably, to that want of mental cultivation which rendered them the last retreats of superstition; insomuch that in the fifth century the abettors of the ancient idolatry began to be denominated *Pagani*, which properly denotes the inhabitants of the country in distinction from those who reside in towns. At the Reformation the progress of the reformed faith went hand in hand with the advancement of letters; it had everywhere the same friends and the same enemies, and, next to its agreement with the Holy Scriptures, its success is chiefly to be ascribed, under God, to the art of printing, the revival of classical learning, and the illustrious patrons of science attached to its cause. In the representation of that glorious period usually styled the Millennium, when religion shall universally prevail, it is mentioned as a conspicuous feature, that *men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* That period will not be distinguished from the preceding, by men's minds being more torpid and inactive, but rather by the consecration of every power to the service of the Most High. It will be a period of remarkable illumination, during which *the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as that of seven days.* Every useful talent will be cultivated, every art subservient to the interests of man, be improved and

perfected; learning will amass her stores, and genius emit her splendour; but the former will be displayed without ostentation, and the latter shine with the softened effulgence of humility and love.

II. We have hitherto spoken of the advantages of *knowledge in general;* we proceed to notice the utility of *religious knowledge* in particular. Religion, on account of its intimate relation to a future state, is every man's proper business, and should be his chief care. Of knowledge in general there are branches which it would be preposterous in the bulk of mankind to attempt to acquire, because they have no immediate connexion with their duties, and demand talents which nature has denied, or opportunities which Providence has withheld. But with respect to the primary truths of religion, the case is different; they are of such daily use and necessity, that they form not the materials of mental luxury, so properly as the food of the mind. In improving the character, the influence of general knowledge is often feeble and always indirect; of religious knowledge the tendency to purify the heart is immediate, and forms its professed scope and design. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* To ascertain the character of the Supreme Author of all things, to know, as far as we are capable of comprehending such a subject, what is his moral disposition, what the situation we stand in towards him, and the principles by which he conducts his administration, will be allowed, by every considerate person, to be of the highest consequence. Compared to this, all other speculations and inquiries sink into insignificance; because every event that can befall us is in his hands, and by his sentence our final condition must be fixed. To regard such an inquiry with indifference is the mark, not of a noble, but of an abject mind, which, immersed in sensuality, or amused with trifles, *deems itself unworthy of eternal life.* To be so absorbed in worldly pursuits as to neglect future prospects, is a conduct that can plead no excuse, until it is ascertained beyond all doubt or contradiction that there is no hereafter, and that nothing remains but that we *eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* Even in that case, to forego the hope of immortality without a sigh; to be gay and sportive on the brink of destruction,

in the very moment of relinquishing prospects on which the wisest and best in every age have delighted to dwell; is the indication of a base and degenerate spirit. If existence be a good, the eternal loss of it must be a great evil; if it be an evil, reason suggests the propriety of inquiring why it is so, of investigating the maladies by which it is oppressed. Amidst the darkness and uncertainty which hang over our future condition, Revelation, by bringing life and immortality to light, affords the only relief. In the Bible alone we learn the real character of the Supreme Being; his holiness, justice, mercy, and truth; the moral condition of man, considered in his relation to Him, is clearly pointed out; the doom of impenitent transgressors denounced; and the method of obtaining mercy, through the interposition of a divine mediator, plainly revealed. There are two considerations which may suffice to evince the indispensable necessity of Scriptural knowledge.

1. The Scriptures contain an authentic discovery *of the way of salvation.* They are a revelation of mercy to a lost world; a reply to that most interesting inquiry, *What we must do to be saved.* The distinguishing feature of the Gospel system is the economy of redemption, or the gracious provision the Supreme Being has thought fit to make for reconciling the world to himself, by the manifestation in human nature of his own Son. It is this which constitutes it the *Gospel*, by way of eminence, or the glad tidings concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, on the right reception of which, or its rejection, turns our everlasting weal or woe. It is not from the character of God, as our creator, it should be remembered, that the hope of the guilty can arise; the fullest development of his essential perfections could afford no relief in this case, and therefore natural religion, were it capable of being carried to the utmost perfection, can never supersede the necessity of revealed. To inspire confidence, an express communication from heaven is necessary: since the introduction of sin has produced a peculiarity in our situation, and a perplexity in our prospects, which nothing but an express assurance of mercy can remove.

In what manner the blessed and only Potentate may think fit to dispose of a race of apostates, is a question on which reason can suggest nothing satisfactory, nothing salutary: a

question, in the solution of which, their being no data to proceed upon, wisdom and folly fail alike, and every order of intellect is reduced to a level; for *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him?* It is a secret which, had he not been pleased to unfold it, must have for ever remained in the breast of the Deity. This secret, in infinite mercy, he has condescended to disclose: the silence, not that which John witnessed in the Apocalypse, of half an hour, but that of ages, is broken; the darkness is past, and we behold, in the Gospel, the astonishing spectacle of *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to them their trespasses*, and sending forth his ambassadors to *entreat us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* To that strange insensibility with respect to the concerns of a future world, which is at once the indication and consequence of the fall, must we ascribe the languid attention with which this communication is received; instead of producing, as it ought, transports of gratitude and joy in every breast.

This, however we may be disposed to regard it, is unquestionably the grand peculiarity of the Gospel, the exclusive boast and treasure of the Scriptures, and most emphatically *the way of salvation*, not only as it reveals the gracious intentions of God to a sinful world, but as it lays a solid foundation for the *supernatural* duties of faith and repentance. All the discoveries of the Gospel bear a most intimate relation to the character and offices of the Saviour; from him they emanate, in him they centre; nor is anything we learn from the Old and New Testament of saving tendency, further than as a part of the truth as it is *in Jesus.* The neglect of considering revelation in this light is a fruitful source of infidelity. Viewing it in no higher character than a republication of the law of nature, men are first led to doubt the importance, and next the truth, of the discoveries it contains; an easy and natural transition, since the question of their importance is so complicated with that of their truth, in the Scriptures themselves, that the most refined ingenuity cannot long keep them separate. *It gives the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* While we

contemplate it under this its true character, we view it in its just dimensions, and feel no inclination to extenuate the force of those representations which are expressive of its pre-eminent dignity. There is nothing will be allowed to come into comparison with it, nothing we shall not be ready to sacrifice for a participation of its blessings, and the extension of its influence. The veneration we shall feel for the Bible, as the depository of *saving knowledge*, will be totally distinct, not only from what we attach to any other book, but from that admiration its other properties inspire; and the variety and antiquity of its history, the light it affords in various researches, its inimitable touches of nature, together with the sublimity and beauty so copiously poured over its pages, will be deemed subsidiary ornaments, the embellishments of the casket, which contains the *pearl of great price*.

2. Scriptural knowledge is of inestimable value on account of its supplying an infallible *rule of life*. To the most untutored mind, the information it affords on this subject is far more full and precise than the highest efforts of reason could attain. In the best moral precepts issuing from human wisdom, there is an incurable defect in that want of authority which robs them of their power over the conscience; they are obligatory no farther than their reason is perceived; a deduction of proofs is necessary, more or less intricate and uncertain, and even when clearest, it is still but the language of man to man, respectable as sage advice, but wanting the force and authority of law. In a well-attested revelation, it is the Judge speaking from the tribunal, the Supreme Legislator promulgating and interpreting his own laws. With what force and conviction do those Apostles and Prophets address us, whose miraculous powers attest them to be the servants of the Most High, the immediate organs of the Deity! As the morality of the Gospel is more pure and comprehensive than was ever inculcated before, so the consideration of its divine origination invests it with an energy of which every system not expressly founded upon it is entirely devoid. We turn at our peril from Him who speaketh to us from heaven.

Of an accountable creature, duty is the concern of every moment, since he is every moment pleasing or displeasing God. It is a universal element, mingling with every action,

and qualifying every disposition and pursuit. The moral quality of conduct, as it serves both to ascertain and to form the character, has consequences in a future world so certain and infallible, that it is represented in Scripture as a seed, no part of which is lost, "for *whatsoever* a man soweth, that also shall he reap." That rectitude which the inspired writers usually denominate *holiness*, is the health and beauty of the soul, capable of bestowing dignity in the absence of every other accomplishment, while the want of it leaves the possessor of the richest intellectual endowments a painted sepulchre. Hence results the indispensable necessity, to every description of persons, of sound religious instruction, and of an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, as its genuine source.

It must be confessed, from melancholy experience, that a speculative acquaintance with the rules of duty is too compatible with the violation of its dictates, and that it is possible for the convictions of conscience to be habitually overpowered by the corrupt suggestions of appetite. To see distinctly the right way, and to pursue it, are not precisely the same thing. Still nothing in the order of means promises so much success as the diligent inculcation of revealed truth. He who is acquainted with the *terrors of the Lord*, cannot live in the neglect of God and religion with present, any more than with future, impunity; the path of disobedience is obstructed, if not rendered impassable; and wherever he turns his eyes he beholds the sword of divine justice stretched out to intercept his passage. Guilt will be appalled, conscience alarmed, and the fruits of unlawful gratification embittered to his taste.

It is surely desirable to place as many obstacles as possible in the path of ruin: to take care that the image of death shall meet the offender at every turn; that he shall not be able to persist without treading upon briars and scorpions, without forcing his way through obstructions more formidable than he can expect to meet with in a contrary course. If you can enlist the nobler part of his nature under the banners of virtue, set him at war with himself, and subject him to the necessity, should he persevere, of stifling and overcoming whatever is most characteristic of a reasonable creature, you have done what will probably not be unproductive of

advantage. If he be at the same time reminded, by his acquaintance with the word of God, of a better state of mind being attainable, a better destiny reserved (provided they are willing and obedient) for the children of men, there is room to hope that, *wearied*, to speak in the language of the prophet, *in the greatness of his way*, he will bethink himself of the true refuge, and implore the Spirit of grace to aid his weakness, and subdue his corruptions. Sound religious instruction is a perpetual counterpoise to the force of depravity. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.*

While we insist on the absolute necessity of an acquaintance with the word of God, we are equally convinced it is but an instrument, which, like every other, requires a hand to wield it; and that, important as it is in the order of means, the Spirit of Christ only can make it effectual, which ought therefore to be earnestly and incessantly implored for that purpose. *Open mine eyes*, saith the Psalmist, *and I shall behold wonderful things out of thy law.* We trust it will be your care, who have the conduct of the school we are recommending to the patronage of this audience, to impress on these children a deep conviction of their radical corruption, and of the necessity of the agency of the Spirit, to render the knowledge they acquire practical and experimental. *In the morning sow your seed, in the evening withhold not your hand; but remember that neither he that soweth, nor he that watereth, is any thing; it is God that giveth the increase.* Be not satisfied with making them read a lesson, or repeat a prayer. By everything tender and solemn in religion, by a due admixture of the awful considerations drawn from the prospects of death and judgment, with others of a more pleasing nature, aim to fix serious impressions on their hearts. Aim to produce a religious concern, carefully watch its progress, and endeavour to conduct it to a prosperous issue. Lead them to the footstool of the Saviour; teach them to rely, as guilty creatures, on his merits alone, and to commit their eternal interests entirely into his hands. Let the salvation of these children be the object, to which every word of your instructions, every exertion of your authority, is

directed. Despise the profane clamour which would deter you from attempting to render them serious, from an apprehension of its making them melancholy, not doubting for a moment, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the path to true happiness lies through purity, humility, and devotion. Meditate the worth of souls: meditate deeply the lessons the Scriptures afford on their inconceivable value and eternal duration. While the philosopher wearies himself with endless speculations on their physical properties and nature, while the politician only contemplates the social arrangements of mankind and the shifting forms of policy, fix *your* attention on the individual importance of man, as the creature of God, and a candidate for immortality. Let it be your highest ambition to train up these children for an unchanging condition of being. Spare no pains to recover them to the image of God; render familiar to their minds, in all its extent, the various branches of that *holiness* without which *none shall see the Lord.* Inculcate the obligation, and endeavour to inspire the love of that rectitude, that eternal rectitude, which was with God before time began, was embodied in the person of his Son, and in its lower communications, will survive every sublunary change, emerge in the dissolution of all things, and be impressed, in refulgent characters, on the new heavens and the new earth, *in which dwelleth righteousness.* Pray often with them, and for them, and remind them of the inconceivable advantages attached to that exercise. Accustom them to a punctual and reverential attendance at the house of God: insist on the sanctification of the Sabbath, by such a disposal of time as is suitable to a day of rest and devotion. Survey them with a vigilant and tender eye, checking every appearance of an evil and depraved disposition the moment it springs up, and encouraging the dawn of piety and virtue. By thus *training them up in the way they should go*, you may reasonably hope that *when old, they will not depart from it.*

We congratulate the nation, on the extent of the efforts employed, and the means set on foot, for the improvement of the lower classes, and especially the children of the poor, in moral and religious knowledge, from which we hope much good will accrue, not only to the parties concerned, but to the kingdom at large. These are the likeliest, or rather, the

only expedients that can be adopted, for forming a sound and virtuous populace; and if there be any truth in the figure by which society is compared to a pyramid, it is on them its stability chiefly depends: the elaborate ornament at the top will be a wretched compensation for the want of solidity in the lower parts of the structure. These are not the times in which it is safe for a nation to repose on the lap of ignorance. If there ever was a season when public tranquillity was ensured by the absence of knowledge, that season is past. The convulsed state of the world will not permit unthinking stupidity to sleep, without being appalled by phantoms, and shaken by terrors, to which reason, which defines her objects, and limits her apprehension, by the reality of things is a stranger. Everything in the condition of mankind announces the approach of some great crisis, for which nothing can prepare us but the diffusion of knowledge, probity, and the fear of the Lord. While the world is impelled, with such violence, in opposite directions; while a spirit of giddiness and revolt is shed upon the nations, and the seeds of mutation are so thickly sown, the improvement of the mass of the people will be our grand security; in the neglect of which, the politeness, the refinement, and the knowledge accumulated in the higher orders, weak and unprotected, will be exposed to imminent danger, and perish like a garland in the grasp of popular fury. *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.*

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF HER LATE ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES,

PREACHED AT

HERVEY LANE, LEICESTER,

NOVEMBER 16, 1817.

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A SERMON.

JEREMIAH xv. 9.

She hath given up the ghost: her sun is gone down while it was yet day.

IT has been the approved practice of the most enlightened teachers of religion to watch for favourable occasions to impress the mind with the lessons of wisdom and piety; with a view to which they have been wont to advert to recent events of an interesting order, that, by striking in with a train of reflection already commenced, they might the more easily and forcibly insinuate the instruction it was their wish to convey. A sound discretion, it must be acknowledged, is requisite to make a selection. To descend to the details and occurrences of private life, would seldom consist with the dignified decorum suited to religious assemblies: the events to which the attention is directed on such occasions should be of a nature somewhat extraordinary, and calculated to produce a deep and permanent impression. Admonition, imparted under such circumstances, is styled, in Scripture, a word in season, or, as it is emphatically expressed in the original, *a word on the wheels*, denoting the peculiar facility with which it makes its way to the heart.

In such a situation, the greatest difficulty a speaker has to surmount is already obviated; attention is awake, an interest is excited, and all that remains is to lead the mind, already sufficiently susceptible, to objects of permanent utility. He originates nothing; it is not so much he that speaks as the events which speak for themselves; he only presumes to interpret their language, and to guide the confused emotions of a sorrowful and swollen heart into the channels of piety.

You are aware, my brethren, how strongly these observations apply to that most affecting occurrence which has recently spread such consternation through this great empire; an event which combines so many circumstances adapted to excite commiseration and concern, that not to survey it with

attention, not to permit it to settle on the heart, would betray the utmost insensibility.

Devout attention to the dealings of Providence is equally consonant to the dictates of reason and of Scripture. He who believes in the superintendence of an eternal mind over the affairs of the universe, is equally irrational and indevout in neglecting to make the course of events the subject of frequent meditation; since the knowledge of God is incomparably more important than the most intimate acquaintance with our fellow-creatures; and as the latter is chiefly acquired by an attentive observation of their conduct, so must the former be obtained in the same way. The operations of Providence are marked with a character as expressive of their great Author as the productions of human agency; and the same Being who speaks like himself in his word, acts like himself in the moral economy of the universe.

However inferior in precision and extent the knowledge derived from the last of these sources, compared to the copious and satisfactory information afforded by the Scriptures, it will appear too important to be neglected, when it is considered that it is *antecedent*, and that, supposing it is not sufficient of itself to evince the existence of a Deity, it is impossible for revelation to supply that defect. The word of God assumes the certainty of his being and attributes, as a truth already sufficiently ascertained by the light of nature, while it proceeds to inform us on a multitude of subjects which elude the researches of finite reason. To us who have access to both these sources of information, they serve to illustrate each other: the obscurities of Providence are elucidated by Scripture; the declarations of Scripture are verified by Providence. One unfolds, as far as it is suitable to our state, the character and designs of the mysterious Agent; the other displays his works; and the admirable harmony which is found to subsist between them strengthens and invigorates our confidence in both.

Hence, a disregard to the operations of the Deity in his providential dispensations is frequently stigmatized in Scripture as an unequivocal symptom of impiety. *Woe unto them*, says Isaiah, *that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! and the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe,*

*and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge.**

The striking analogy which the course of nature and Providence bears to the peculiar discoveries of Revelation, has been traced by an eminent prelate with a depth and precision which reflect honour on human nature.† It is not my intention to enter on this topic: let me only be permitted to remark, that the analogy extends not only to the discoveries themselves, but to the manner in which they are conveyed. In both, a constant appeal is made to facts. A large portion of the Bible is devoted to history, where the grand truths which are taught are intimately incorporated with the narrative, and mingled with the character and transactions of living agents; by which they are rendered far more impressive than if they had remained in an abstract and didactic form.

How languid the impression produced by a bare statement of the doctrine of a particular providence, for example, compared to that which we derive from the history of Abraham, whom we see conducted from kingdom to kingdom by a divine hand, and instructed where to pitch his tent, and where to erect his altars. The wonderful evolutions in the story of Joseph also illustrate the conduct of him whose *ways are in the deep, and his paths past finding out*, in a manner far more powerful than the clearest instruction conveyed in general propositions.

When the Almighty was pleased to introduce, by the advent of the Messiah, a more perfect and permanent economy of religion, he founded it entirely on facts, attested by the most unexceptionable evidence, and the most splendid miracles. The apostles were *witnesses*, who, by the signs and wonders they wrought, made that appeal to the senses of men, which had been previously made to their own; and the doctrines which they taught in their writings were little more than natural consequences resulting from the undoubted truth of their testimony. If they wish to inculcate the doctrine of a resurrection and future judgment, they deem it sufficient to appeal to the fact of Christ's resurrection and session at the right hand of God; they presented no evidence

* Isaiah v. 1 † Bishop Butler.

of a future state, except what ultimately terminates in the person of the Saviour, as the first-begotten from the dead; and most anxiously warn us against resting our hope of salvation on any other basis than that of a sensible sacrifice, *the offering of the body of Christ once for all.* Thus, whatever is sublime and consolatory in the Christian religion originates in facts and events which appealed to the senses, and passed in this visible theatre; though their ultimate result is commensurate with eternity. In order to rescue us from the idolatry of the creature, and the dominion of the senses, He who is intimately acquainted with our frame makes use of sensible appearances, and causes his Son to become flesh, and to pitch his tent amongst us, that, by faith in his crucified humanity, we may ascend, as by a mystic ladder, to the abode of the Eternal.

Providence, it has already been remarked, conveys its most impressive lessons in the same shape; and by clothing the abstractions of religion in the realities of life, renders them in a manner palpable. While they remain in the form of general truths, and are the objects of speculation, they affect us but little; they preserve us from the shallow sophistry of impiety, and conduct us to just conclusions on subjects of the last moment; but their control over the heart and conduct is scarcely felt. In order to be deeply impressed we require some object to be presented more in unison with the sensitive part of our nature—something more precise and limited—something which the mind may more distinctly realize, and the imagination more firmly grasp. The process of feeling widely differs in this respect from that of reasoning, and is regulated by opposite laws. In reasoning we recede as far as possible from sensible impressions; and the more general and comprehensive our conclusions, and the larger our abstractions, provided they are sustained by sufficient evidence, the more knowledge is extended, and the intellect improved. Sensibility is excited, the affections are awakened, on the contrary, on those occasions in which we tread back our steps, and, descending from generalities, direct the attention to individual objects and particular events. We all acknowledge, for example, our constant exposure to death; but it is seldom we experience the practical impression of that weighty truth, except when we witness the stroke of mortality actually in-

flicted. We universally acknowledge the uncertainty of human prospects, and the instability of earthly distinctions; but it is when we behold them signally destroyed and confounded, that we feel our presumption checked, and our hearts appalled.

For this reason, He who spake as never man spake, was wont to convey his instructions by sensible images, and in familiar apologues, that, by concentrating the attention within the sphere of particular occurrences and individual objects, the impressions of his lessons might become more vivid and more profound.

It is thus that Providence is addressing us at the present moment: and if we are wise, we shall convert the melancholy event before us, not to the purposes of political speculation, fruitless conjecture, or anxious foreboding, but (what is infinitely better) to a profound consideration of the hand of God; and then, though we may be at a loss to explore the reason of his conduct, we shall be at none how to improve it.

Criminal as it is always not to mark the footsteps of Deity, the guilt of such neglect is greatly aggravated, when he comes forth from his place to execute his judgments and display his wrath; when he is pleased, as at present, to extinguish in an instant the hopes of a nation, to clothe the throne in sackcloth, and involve a kingdom in mourning. The greatness, the suddenness of this calamity, accompanied with circumstances of the most tender and affecting interest, speaks to the heart in accents which nothing but the utmost obduration can resist; so that were it the sole intention of Him who has inflicted it, to awaken the careless, and alarm the secure, among the higher orders especially, we are at a loss to perceive what could have been done more than has been accomplished. Whatever imagination can combine in an example of the uncertainty of life, the frailty of youth, the evanescence of beauty, and the nothingness of worldly greatness, in its highest state of elevation, is exhibited in this awful event in its full dimensions.

The first particular which strikes the attention in this solemn visitation, is the rank of the illustrious personage, who appears to have been placed on the pinnacle of society for the express purpose of rendering her fall the more conspicuous, and of convincing as many as are susceptible of conviction

that *man at his best estate is altogether vanity.* The Deity himself adorned the victim with his own hands, accumulating upon her all the decorations and ornaments best adapted to render her the object of universal admiration. He permitted her to touch whatever this sublunary scene presents that is most attractive and alluring, but to grasp nothing; and after conducting her to an eminence whence she could survey all the glories of empire as her destined possession, closed her eyes in death.

That such an event should affect us in a manner very superior to similar calamities which occur in private life, is agreeable to the order of nature, and the will of God; nor is the profound sensation it has produced to be considered as the symbol of courtly adulation. The catastrophe itself, it is true, apart from its peculiar circumstances, is not a rare occurrence. Mothers often expire in the ineffectual effort to give birth to their offspring; both are consigned to the same tomb, and the survivor, after witnessing the wreck of so many hopes and joys, is left to mourn alone, *refusing to be comforted, because they are not.* There is no sorrow which imagination can picture, no sign of anguish which nature agonized and oppressed can exhibit, no accent of woe, but what is already familiar to the ear of fallen, afflicted humanity; and the roll which Ezekiel beheld, flying through the heavens, inscribed within and without *with sorrow, lamentation, and woe*, enters, sooner or later, into every house, and discharges its contents in every bosom. But in the private departments of life, the distressing incidents which occur are confined to a narrow circle. The hope of an individual is crushed, the happiness of a family is destroyed; but the social system is unimpaired, and its movements experience no impediment, and sustain no sensible injury. The arrow passes through the air, which soon closes upon it, and all is tranquil. But when the great lights and ornaments of the world, placed aloft to conduct its inferior movements, are extinguished, such an event resembles the apocalyptic vial poured into that element which changes its whole temperature, and is the presage of fearful commotions, of thunders, lightnings, and tempests.

Independently of the political consequences that may result from an event, which, by changing the order of succession, involves the prospects of the nation in obscurity, we are

formed to be peculiarly affected by the spectacle of prostrate majesty and fallen greatness. We are naturally prone to associate with the contemplation of exalted rank the idea of superior felicity. We perceive in persons of that station a command over the sources of enjoyment, a power of gratifying their inclinations in a multitude of forms from which others are precluded: and as they appear to possess the means of supplying every want, of obviating every inconvenience, and of alleviating, to a considerable extent, every sorrow incident to humanity, it is not to be wondered at that we regard them as the darlings of nature, and the favourites of fortune. The share they possess of the bounties and indulgences of Providence is so much beyond the ordinary measure of allotment, and so large a portion of human art and industry is exerted in smoothing their passage, and strewing flowers in their path, that we almost necessarily associate ideas of superior enjoyment with a description of persons, for whose gratification the inferior classes seem born to toil.

We are so constituted also, that the sight of felicity, when it is not mixed with envy, is always connected with pleasing emotions, whether it is considered as possessed by ourselves or by others; not excepting even the animal creation. For who can behold their harmless pleasures, the wild gambols of their young, rioting in the superabundance of life and excess of pleasure, without experiencing a momentary exhilaration? As their enjoyments are considered too scanty and limited to excite a feeling of envy, so, from an opposite cause, the privileges attached to an elevated station seldom produce it. Happily for mankind, the corrosions of that baleful passion are almost entirely confined to equals, or to those between whom there exist some pretensions to equality; who, having started from nearly the same level, have recently distanced each other in the chase of distinction or of glory. But when the superiority we contemplate has been long possessed, when it is such as renders competition hopeless and comparison absurd, the feelings of rivalry are superseded by an emotion of respect, and the spectacle presented of superior felicity produces its primary and natural effect. We dwell with complacency on a system of arrangements so exquisitely adapted apparently to the production of happiness, and yield a sort of involuntary homage to the person in whom it centres, without

appearing to disturb our pretensions, or interfere with our pursuits. Hence, of all factitious distinctions, that of birth is least exposed to envy; the thought of aspiring to an equality in that respect being instantly checked by the idea of impossibility. When we turn our eyes towards the possessors of distinguished opulence and power, so many glittering appendages crowd on the imagination, productive of agreeable emotion, that we lose sight of the essential equality of the species, and think less of the persons themselves than of the artificial splendour which surrounds them.

That there is some illusion in these sentiments, that the balance in respect of real enjoyment is far from being so decidedly in favour of the opulent and the great as they prompt us to imagine, is an indubitable fact. Nevertheless, the disposition they create to regard the external appearances of opulence and power, with respect unmingled with envy, and to acquiesce with pleasure in the visible superiority they confer, is productive of incalculable benefit. But for this, the distinctions of rank, and the privileges and immunities attached to each, on which much of the tranquillity and all the improvements of society depend, would fall a prey to an unfeeling rapacity; the many would hasten to seize on the exclusive advantages of the few; and the selfish passions, uncontrolled by a more refined order of feeling, would break forth with a fury that would quickly overwhelm the mounds and fences of legal authority. By means of the sentiments to which we have adverted, society exerts a sort of plastic power over its members, which forms their habits and inclinations to a cheerful acquiescence in the allotments of Providence, and bestows on the positive institutions of man the stability of nature.

As the necessary consequence of these sentiments, when great reverses befall the higher orders, the mind experiences a kind of revulsion; the contrast of their present with their past situation produces a deeper sympathy than is experienced on other occasions. We measure the height from which they fell, and calculate the extent of their loss on a scale proportioned to the value we have been accustomed to attach to the immunities and enjoyments of which it deprives them. The sight of such elaborate preparations for happiness rendered abortive, of a majestic fabric so proudly seated and exquisitely

adorned suddenly overturned, disturbs the imagination like a convulsion of nature, and diffuses a feeling of insecurity and terror, as though nothing remained on which we could repose with confidence. Hence, the misfortunes of princes who have survived their greatness, and terminated a brilliant career by captivity and death, have been selected by poets in every age as the basis of those fictions which are invented for the purpose of producing commiseration.

To guard against these feelings being carried to excess, so as to induce an oblivion of moral distinction, a sacrifice of principle, a mean and pusillanimous prostration before the profligate and the vicious; to urge the necessity of correcting their aberrations by the dictates of reason and religion, is foreign to our purpose. The utility of a class of feelings is not the less certain for their being liable to abuse. Let me rather avail myself of the awful dispensation before us, to suggest a warning to the possessors of these envied distinctions, not to overrate their value, nor confide in their continuance, which at most are but *the flower of the field*, as much distinguished by its superior frailty, as by its beauty. They belong to the *fashion of that world which passeth away;* they contribute much to embellish and beautify this transitory abode, to the ornament of which the Supreme Being has shown himself not inattentive. As the God of order, whatever tends to secure and perpetuate it is the object of his approbation; nor can we doubt that he regards with complacency that distribution of men into distinct orders, which assimilates the social system to that variety which pervades the economy of nature.

Let their possessors remember, however, that they must shortly be divested of the brilliant appendages and splendid ornaments of rank and station, and enter into a world where they are unknown; where they will carry nothing but the essential elements of their being, impressed with those indelible characters which must sustain the scrutiny of Omniscience. These artificial decorations, be it remembered, are not, properly speaking, their own; the elevation to which they belong is momentary; and as the merit of an actor is not estimated by the part which he performs, but solely by the truth and propriety of his representation, and the peasant is often applauded where the monarch is hissed; so when the great

drama of life is concluded, he who allots its scenes and determines its period will take an account of his servants, and assign to each his punishment or reward, in his proper character. The existence of a perfect and eternal mind renders such an order of things necessary; for with whatever skill society may be organized, still it will make but a faint approximation to our limited conceptions of justice; and since there is an original mind in which these ideas subsist in their utmost perfection, whence the finite conception of justice is transcribed, they must at some period or other be realized. That they are not so at present is obvious. Merit is often depressed, vice exalted; and with the best regulations of human wisdom, executed with the utmost impartiality, malevolence will ever be armed with the power of inflicting a thousand nameless indignities and oppressions, with perfect impunity. Though the efficacy of human laws is far more conspicuous in restraining and punishing than in rewarding, in which their resources are extremely limited, it is only those flagrant offences that disturb the public tranquillity to which they extend; while the silent stream of misery issuing from private vice, which is incessantly impairing the foundations of public and individual happiness, by a secret and invisible sap, remains unchecked. The gradations even of rank, which are partly the cause and partly the effect of the highest social improvements, are accompanied with so many incidental evils, that nothing but an enlarged contemplation of their ultimate tendency and effect could reconcile us to the monstrous incongruities and deformities they display, in wealth which ruins its possessor, titles which dignify the base, and influence exerted to none but the most mischievous purposes. The enlightened observer of human affairs is often struck with horror at the consequences incidentally resulting from laws and institutions which, on account of their general utility, command his unfeigned veneration. These are the unequivocal indications of a fallen state; but since it is also a state of probation, the irregularities by which it is distinguished, in the frequent exaltation of the wicked and the humiliation and depression of the righteous, are such as furnish the fittest materials for trial. What state, let me ask, is better calculated than the present, to put it to the test, whether we will suffer ourselves to be swayed by the dictates of reason, or the fascinations of

pleasure; whether we will allow the future to predominate over the present, the things that are invisible over those that are seen; and, preferring an eternal recompense with God to the transitory objects of concupiscence, submit to be controlled by his will, and led by his Spirit.

Whatever reception these views may meet with, one thing is certain, that it is invariably the most necessary they should be inculcated where they are the most unwelcome; and that if there be any one description of persons more in danger than another, of being lulled into a forgetfulness of future prospects, it is to them, especially, the warning voice should be directed, the eternal world unveiled. And who, but will acknowledge, that this danger is especially incident to such as bask in the smiles of fortune, and, possessing an unlimited command over the sources of enjoyment, are bound to the world by the most vivid associations of pleasure and of hope? *Give me neither poverty nor riches*, said one of the wisest of men, *lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or, lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of God in vain.* While riches exempt their possessors from the temptation of meaner vices, his observation taught him their peculiar exposure to practical impiety, and to that forgetfulness of God which is the root and core of all our disorders.

Let them turn their eyes, then, for a moment, to this illustrious Princess; who, while she lived, concentrated in herself whatever distinguishes the higher orders of society, and may now be considered as addressing them from the tomb.

Born to inherit the most illustrious monarchy in the world, and united at an early period to the object of her choice, whose virtues amply justified her preference, she enjoyed (what is not always the privilege of that rank) the highest connubial felicity, and had the prospect of combining all the tranquil enjoyments of private life, with the splendour of a royal station. Placed on the summit of society, to her every eye was turned, in her every hope was centred, and nothing was wanting to complete her felicity, except perpetuity. To a grandeur of mind suited to her royal birth and lofty destination, she joined an exquisite taste for the beauties of nature and the charms of retirement; where, far from the gaze of the multitude, and the frivolous agitations of fashionable life, she employed her hours in visiting, with her distin-

guished consort, the cottages of the poor, in improving her virtues, in perfecting her reason, and acquiring the knowledge best adapted to qualify her for the possession of power, and the cares of empire. One thing only was wanting to render our satisfaction complete, in the prospect of the accession of such a Princess; it was that she might become the living mother of children.

The long-wished-for moment at length arrived: but alas! the event anticipated with such eagerness will form the most melancholy part of our history.

It is no reflection on this amiable Princess, to suppose that in her early dawn, with the *dew of her youth* so fresh upon her, she anticipated a long series of years, and expected to be led through successive scenes of enchantment, rising above each other in fascination and beauty. It is natural to suppose she identified herself with this great nation, which she was born to govern; and that, while she contemplated its pre-eminent lustre in arts and in arms, its commerce encircling the globe, its colonies diffused through both hemispheres, and the beneficial effects of its institutions extending to the whole earth; she considered them as so many component parts of her grandeur. Her heart, we may well conceive, would often be ruffled with emotions of trembling ecstasy, when she reflected that it was her province to live entirely for others, to compose the felicity of a great people, to move in a sphere which would afford scope for the exercise of philanthropy the most enlarged, of wisdom the most enlightened; and that, while others are doomed to pass through the world in obscurity, she was to supply the materials of history, and to impart that impulse to society, which was to decide the destiny of future generations. Fired with the ambition of equalling, or surpassing, the most distinguished of her predecessors, she probably did not despair of reviving the remembrance of the brightest parts of their story; and of once more attaching the epoch of British glory to the annals of a female reign. It is needless to add that the nation went with her, and probably outstripped her, in these delightful anticipations. We fondly hoped that a life so inestimable would be protracted to a distant period, and that, after diffusing the blessings of a just and enlightened administration, and being surrounded by a numerous progeny, she would gradually, in a good old age,

sink under the horizon, amidst the embraces of her family and the benedictions of her country. But alas! these delightful visions are fled, and what do we behold in their room, but the funeral pall and shroud, a palace in mourning, a nation in tears, and the shadow of death settled over both like a cloud! O the unspeakable vanity of human hopes! the incurable blindness of man to futurity! ever doomed to grasp at shadows, to seize with avidity what turns to dust and ashes in his hands, *to sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind.*

How must the heart of the royal parent be torn with anguish on this occasion; deprived of a daughter who combined every quality suited to engage his affection and elevate his hopes; an only child, the heir of his throne; and doomed apparently to behold the sceptre pass from his posterity into other hands; his sorrow must be such as words are inadequate to portray. Nor is it possible to withhold our tender sympathy from the unhappy mother, who, in addition to the wounds she has received by the loss of her nearest relations, and by still more trying vicissitudes, has witnessed the extinction of her last hope, in the sudden removal of one in whose bosom she might naturally hope to repose her griefs, and find a peaceful haven from the storms of life and the tossings of the ocean. But above all, the illustrious consort of this lamented Princess is entitled to the deepest commiseration. How mysterious are the ways of Providence, in rendering the virtues of this distinguished personage the source of his greatest trials! By these he merited the distinction to which monarchs aspired in vain, and by these he exposed himself to a reverse of fortune, the severity of which can only be adequately estimated by this illustrious mourner. These virtues, however, will not be permitted to lose their reward. They will find it in the grateful attachment of the British nation, in the remembrance of his having contributed the principal share to the happiness of the most amiable and exalted of women; and, above all, we humbly hope, when the agitations of time shall cease, in a reunion with the object of his attachment, before the presence of Him who will *wipe every tear from the eye.*

When Jehovah was pleased to command Isaiah the prophet to make a public proclamation in the ears of the people, what was it, think you, he was ordered to announce? Was it some profound secret of nature, which had baffled the

inquiries of philosophers? or some great political convulsion which was to change the destiny of empires? No: these were not the sort of communications most suited to the grandeur of his nature, or the exigencies of ours. *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.** Instead of presenting to our eyes the mutations of power, and the revolutions of states and kingdoms, he exhibits a more awful and affecting spectacle—the human race itself withering under the breath of his mouth, perishing under his rebuke; while he plants his eternal word, which subsists from generation to generation, in undecaying vigour, to console our wretchedness, and impregnate the dying mass with the seed of immortality. As the frailty of man, and the perpetuity of *his* promises, are the greatest contrast the universe presents, so the practical impression of this truth, however obvious, is the beginning of wisdom, nor is there a degree of moral elevation to which it will not infallibly conduct us.

The annunciation of life and immortality by the Gospel, did it contain no other truth, were sufficient to cast all the discoveries of science into shade, and to reduce the highest improvements of reason to the comparative nothingness which the flight of a moment bears to eternity.

By this discovery the prospects of human nature are infinitely widened, the creature of yesterday becomes the child of eternity; and as felicity is not the less valuable in the eye of reason because it is remote, nor the misery which is certain less to be deprecated because it is not immediately felt, the care of our future interests becomes our chief, and, properly speaking, our only concern. All besides will shortly be nothing; and therefore, whenever it comes into competition with these, it is as the small dust of the balance.

Is it now any subject of regret, think you, to this amiable Princess, so suddenly removed, *that her sun went down while it was yet day?* or that, prematurely snatched from prospects

* Isaiah xl. 6-8.

the most brilliant and enchanting, she was compelled to close her eyes so soon on a world of whose grandeur she formed so conspicuous a part? No: other objects occupy her mind, other thoughts engage her attention, and will continue to engage it for ever. All things with her are changed; and viewed from that pure and ineffable light, for which we humbly hope religion prepared her, the lustre of a diadem is scarcely visible, majesty emits a feeble and sickly ray, and all ranks and conditions of men appear but so many troops of pilgrims, in different garbs, toiling through the same vale of tears, distinguished only by different degrees of wretchedness.

In the full fruition of eternal joys, she is so far from looking back with lingering regret on what she has quitted, that she is surprised it had the power of affecting her so much; that she took so deep an interest in the scenes of this shadowy state of being, while so near to an *eternal weight of glory*; and, as far as memory may be supposed to contribute to her happiness by associating the present with the past, it is not the recollection of her illustrious birth and elevated prospects, but that she visited the abodes of the poor, and learned to weep with those that weep; that, surrounded with the fascinations of pleasure, she was not inebriated by its charms; that she resisted the strongest temptations to pride, preserved her ears open to truth, was impatient of the voice of flattery; in a word, that she sought and cherished the inspirations of piety, and *walked humbly with her God*.* This is fruit which survives when the flower withers—the only ornaments and treasures we can carry into eternity.

While we look at this event with the eyes of flesh, and survey it in the aspect it bears towards our national prospects, it appears a most singular and affecting catastrophe. But considered in itself, or, more properly, in its relation to a certain, though invisible futurity, its consequences are but commensurate to those which result from the removal of the meanest individual. He whose death is as little regarded as the fall of a leaf in the forest, and he whose departure involves a nation in despair, are, in this view of the subject (by far

* From the obscurity of the author's situation he must be supposed incapable of authenticating these traits in her character from his personal knowledge; but from the respectable publications in which they are related, he entertains no doubt of their truth.

the most important one), upon a level. Before the presence of the great I AM, into which they both immediately enter, these distinctions vanish, and the true statement of the fact, on either supposition, is, that an immortal spirit has finished its earthly career; has passed the barriers of the invisible world, to appear before its Maker, in order to receive that sentence which will fix its irrevocable doom, *according to the deeds done in the body*. On either supposition, an event has taken place which has no parallel in the revolutions of time, the consequences of which have not room to expand themselves within a narrower sphere than an endless duration. An event has occurred, the issues of which must ever baffle and elude all finite comprehensions, by concealing themselves in the depths of that abyss, of that eternity, which is the dwelling-place of Deity, where there is sufficient space for the destiny of each, among the innumerable millions of the human race, to develope itself, and without interference or confusion, to sustain and carry forward its separate infinity of interest.

That there is nothing hyperbolic or extravagant in these conceptions, but that they are the *true sayings of God*, you may learn from almost every page of the sacred oracles. For what are they, in fact, but a different mode of announcing the doctrine taught us in the following words: *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?*

When it is considered that the doctrine of a life to come is ascertained by the advent of the Messiah, with a degree of evidence so superior to that which attaches to any other futurity, that he who refuses to believe it on his testimony, would not be persuaded although one rose from the dead, the propensity to disregard it, however general, is the most astonishing phenomenon in nature. Man is naturally a prospective creature, endowed not only with a capacity of comparing the present with the past, but also of anticipating the future, and dwelling with anxious rumination on scenes which are yet remote. He is capable of carrying his views, of attaching his anxieties, to a period much more distant than that which measures the limits of his present existence; capable, we distinctly perceive, of plunging into the depths of future duration, of identifying himself with the sentiments

and opinions of a distant age, and of enjoying, by anticipation, the fame of which he is aware he shall never be conscious, and the praises he shall never hear. So strongly is he disposed to link his feelings with futurity, that shadows become realities, when contemplated as subsisting there; and the phantom of posthumous celebrity, the faint image of his being, impressed on future generations, is often preferred to the whole of his present existence, with all its warm and vivid realities. The complexion of the day that is passing over him is determined by the anticipations of the morrow: the present borrows its brightness and its gloom from the future, which, presenting itself to his contemplation, as in a mirror, incessantly agitates him with apparitions of terror or delight. In the calculations of interest, the mind is affected in the same manner; it is perpetuity which stamps its value on whatever we possess, so that the lowest epicure would prefer a small accession to his property to the most exquisite repast; and none are found so careless of futurity, as not to prefer the inheritance he may bequeath, to one of equal value, the title to which expires with his life.

How is it, then, that we find it so difficult to prevail upon men to fix their attention firmly on another world, that real future existence which reason assures us is probable, which revelation teaches us is certain, which is separated from us by so narrow a boundary, and into which thousands of our fellow-creatures are passing every moment? How is it that the professed followers of Him especially, who descended from heaven, who *came forth from the Father* to conduct us thither, are so indisposed to turn their thoughts and contemplations to that unchanging state of being, into which they are so shortly to enter? It is not, we perceive, that to move forward is not congenial with our mental constitution: it is not because we are so enchanted with the present scene, as to be incapable of diverting our attention from it; for we are continually disquieted by a restless desire of something future: it is not because we are seldom warned or reminded of another state of existence; for every funeral bell, every opening grave, every symptom of decay within, and of change without us, is a separate warning, to say nothing of the present most affecting dispensation, which has filled this nation with such consternation and distress.

Were any other event of far inferior moment ascertained by evidence, which made but a distant approach to that which attests the certainty of a life to come; had we equal assurance that after a very limited, though uncertain period, we should be called to migrate into a distant land, whence we were never to return, the intelligence would fill every breast with solicitude; it would become the theme of every tongue; and we should avail ourselves with the utmost eagerness of all the means of information respecting the prospects which awaited us in that unknown country. Much of our attention would be occupied in preparing for our departure; we should cease to regard the place we now inhabit as our home, and nothing would be considered of moment but as it bore upon our future destination. How strange is it, then, that, with the certainty we all possess of shortly entering into another world, we avert our eyes as much as possible from the prospect; that we seldom permit it to penetrate us; and that the moment the recollection occurs, we hasten to dismiss it as an unwelcome intrusion! Is it not surprising, that the volume we profess to recognise as the record of immortality, and the sole depository of whatever information it is possible to obtain respecting the portion which awaits us, should be consigned to neglect, and rarely, if ever, consulted with the serious intention of ascertaining our future condition?

That a creature formed for an endless duration should be disposed to turn his attention from that object, and to contract his views and prospects within a circle which, compared to eternity, is but a mathematical point, is truly astonishing; and as it is impossible to account for it from the natural constitution of the mind, it must originate in some great *moral* cause. It shows that some strange catastrophe has befallen the species; that some deep and radical malady is inherent in the moral system. Though philosophers of a certain description may attempt to explain and justify it on some ingenious hypothesis; yet, in spite of metaphysical subtleties, the alarming inquiry will still return—How is it that the disposition of mankind is so much at variance with their prospects? that no train of reflections is more unwelcome than that which is connected with their eternal home? If the change is considered as a happy one,—if the final abode to which we are hastening is supposed to be an improvement on the present,

why shrink back from it with aversion? If it is contemplated as a state of suffering, it is natural to inquire what it is that has invested it with so dark and sombre a character. What is it which has enveloped that species of futurities in a gloom which pervades no other? If the indisposition to realize a life to come arises in any measure from a vague presentiment that it will bring us, so to speak, into a closer contact with the Deity, by presenting clearer manifestations of his character and perfections (and who can doubt that this is a principal cause?),the proof it affords of a great deterioration in our moral condition is complete. For who will suppose it possible a disposition to hide himself from his Creator should be an original part of the constitution of a reasonable creature? or what more portentous and unnatural, than for him that is formed to shun the presence of his Maker, and to place his felicity in the forgetfulness of Him *in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being?* If he is pained and disquieted whenever he is forcibly reminded of Him whose power sustains, and whose bounty replenishes the universe with whatever is good and fair; if the source of being and of happiness is the object of terror instead of confidence and love; it is not easy to conceive what can afford a stronger conviction of guilt, or a more certain presage of danger.

The conclusion to which we are conducted is confirmed by inspiration, which assures us that a great revolution has actually befallen the species; and that, in consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, we have incurred the forfeiture of the divine favour, and the loss of the divine image. In this situation it is not difficult to perceive that the economy adapted to our relief must include two things, the means of expiating guilt, and the means of moral renovation: in other words, an atoning sacrifice, and a sanctifying Spirit. Both these objects are accomplished in the advent of the Saviour, who, by presenting himself as a sin offering, has made ample satisfaction to offended justice, and purchased by his merits the renovating Spirit, which is freely offered to as many as sincerely seek it. By the former, the obstructions to our happiness arising from the divine nature are removed · by the latter, the disqualification springing from our own. By providing a sacrifice of infinite value in the person of the Only Begotten, he has consulted his majesty as the righteous

governor of the world, and has reconciled the seemingly incompatible claims of justice and of mercy. By bestowing the Spirit as the fruit of *his* mediation and intercession, whose *soul was made an offering for sin*, pollution is purged, and that image of God restored to sinful creatures, which capacitates them for the enjoyment of pure and perfect felicity. Thus every requisite which we can conceive necessary in a restorative dispensation is found in the Gospel, exhibited with a perspicuity level to the meanest capacity, combined with such a depth in the contrivance, and such an exquisite adaptation to our state and condition, as surpass finite comprehension. This is the substance of those glad tidings which constitute the *Gospel;* to the cordial reception of which must all the difference be ascribed which will shortly be found between the condition of the saved and the lost.

Be assured, my Christian brethren, it is by a profound submission of the soul to this doctrine, offensive as it may be to the pride of human virtue, repugnant as it undoubtedly is to the dictates of philosophy, falsely so called, that we must *acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace.* When we mention peace, however, we mean not the stupid security of a mind that refuses to reflect; we mean a tranquillity which rests upon an unshaken basis, which no anticipations, however remote, no power of reflection, however piercing or profound, no evolutions which time may disclose or eternity conceal, are capable of impairing; a peace which is founded on the oath and promise of him who cannot lie; which, springing from the consciousness of an ineffable alliance with the Father of spirits, makes us to share in his fulness, to become a partner with him in his eternity; a repose, pure and serene as the unruffled wave, which reflects the heavens from its bosom, while it is accompanied with a feeling of exultation and triumph, natural to such as are conscious that ere long, having overcome, they shall possess all things.

While the prize is so transcendently great, no unparalleled efforts, no incredible exertions, are requisite to obtain it; it is placed within the grasp of every hand. If the great sacrifice had not been presented, if the succours of heaven had not been offered, if the glad tidings had not been proclaimed, nor life and immortality brought to light, our condition would indeed have been deplorable; and little encouragement should

we have had to engage in the great work of seeking salvation. But now *all things are ready*, and the chief, or rather the only pre-requisite, is a child-like docility, a disposition to derive wisdom from the fountain of light, strength from the strong, together with a fixed and immovable conviction, that the care of our eternal interests is the grand concern.

Some events, by the established course of nature, are rendered so certain, that, however important in their consequences, they are not the proper subjects of deliberation. Their certainty, assumed as a basis in all our calculations and reasonings, is entitled to great weight in adjusting the plan of future operation; but it is with a view to other objects that our schemes are formed, and our anxiety exerted. Other events are precluded from deliberation by an opposite reason, the perfect conviction that they will never arrive. Both these are regarded by wise men as fixed, immovable points, which supply motives for submission, but no incentives to exertion.

There is another class of futurities, whose existence is not ascertained by immutable, independent causes; they are placed in some measure within our reach, are subjected in a degree to our control, and are neither so certain as to produce security, nor so impossible or improbable as to occasion despair. These form the motives to human activity, and the objects of rational pursuit; in the proper selection of which, and the application of means best adapted to their attainment, consists the whole wisdom of man. The hopes and fears associated with the contemplation of events of this nature, are the springs which set mankind in motion; and while the frivolous and the dissipated fix their attention on such as are productive of transient and momentary impressions, the wise in their generation select those which are the basis of permanent interests, such as wealth, power, and reputation; which whoever acquires by a course of strenuous exertion, is applauded and extolled as a pattern for universal imitation. Yet, what extreme shortsightedness characterizes the most prosperous votary of the world, compared with the humblest candidate for immortality! *This their way is their folly, though their posterity approve their sayings.* Of the great prizes in human life, it is not often the lot of the most enterprising to obtain many; they are placed on opposite sides of the path,

so that it is impossible to approach one of them, without proportionably receding from another; whence it results that the wisest plans are founded on a compromise between good and evil, where much that is the object of desire is finally relinquished and abandoned, in order to secure superior advantages. The candidate for immortality is reduced to no such alternative; the possession of his object comprehends all: it combines in itself, without imperfection and without alloy, all the scattered portions of good for which the votaries of the world are accustomed to contend. Such also is our constitution, and so little is the sublunary state adapted to be our rest, that we are usually more alive to the good we want, than to that which we possess; that, rendered delicate by indulgence, rather than satiated by enjoyment, the slightest check in the career of our desires, inflicts a wound which their gratification in every other particular is incapable of healing. Thus the wretched Haman, in the highest plenitude of affluence and power, exclaimed, *All this availeth me nothing, while Mordecai sits in the gate.* Such is the capricious fastidiousness of the human heart, chiefly in those who are most pampered with the gifts of fortune, that the person whom nothing has the power of gratifying long, the merest trifle is sufficient to displease, so that he is often extremely chagrined and disquieted by the absence of that whose presence would scarcely be felt. The fruition of religious objects calms and purifies, as much as it delights; it strengthens, instead of enervating the mind, which it fills without agitating, and, by settling it on its proper basis, diffuses an unspeakable repose through all its powers.

As the connexion between means and ends is not so indissolubly fixed as to preclude the possibility of disappointment, and *the battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift, nor riches to men of understanding*, the votary of the world is never secure of his object, which frequently mocks his pursuit, by vanishing at the moment when he is just on the point of seizing it. He often possesses not even the privilege of failing with impunity, and has no medium left between complete success and infallible destruction. In the struggles of ambition, in violent competitions for power or for glory, how slender the partition betwixt the widest extremes of fortune, and how few the steps and apparently

slight the circumstances, which sever the throne from the prison, the palace from the tomb! *So Tibni died*, says the sacred historian, with inimitable simplicity, *and Omri reigned.* He who makes the care of his eternal interests his chief pursuit, is exposed to no such perils and vicissitudes. His hopes will be infallibly crowned with success. The soil on which he bestows his labour will infinitely more than recompense his care; and however disproportioned the extent and duration of his efforts to the magnitude of their object, however insufficient to secure it by their intrinsic vigour, the faithfulness of God is pledged to bring them to a prosperous issue. *Ask*, said our Lord, *and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For whosoever asketh receiveth; and whosoever seeketh findeth; and whosoever knocketh, to him it shall be opened.* The pursuit of salvation is the only enterprise in which no one fails from weakness none from an invincible ignorance of futurity, none from the sudden vicissitudes of fortune, against which there exists no effectual security, none from those occasional eclipses of knowledge and fits of inadvertence, to which the most acute and wakeful intellect is exposed. How suitable is it to the character of the Being who reveals himself by the name of *Love*, to render the object which is alone worthy of being aspired to with ardour, the only one to which all may, without presumption, aspire; and while he conceals thrones and sceptres in the shadow of his hand, and bestows them where he pleases, with a mysterious and uncontrollable sovereignty, on opening the springs of eternal felicity, to proclaim to the utmost bounds of the earth, *Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him partake of the water of life freely!*

But the impotence of the world never appears more conspicuous than when it has exhausted its powers in the gratification of its votaries, by placing them in a situation which leaves them nothing further to hope. It frustrates the sanguine expectations of its admirers as much by what it bestows, as by what it withholds, and reserves its severest disappointment for the season of possession. The agitation, the uncertainty, the varied emotions of hope and fear which accompany the pursuit of worldly objects, create a powerful interest, and maintain a brisk and wholesome circulation; but when the

pursuit is over, unless some other is substituted in its place, satiety succeeds to enjoyment, and pleasures cease to please. Tired of treading the same circle, of beholding the same spectacles, of frequenting the same amusements, and repeating the same follies, with nothing to awaken sensibility, or to stimulate to action, the minion of fortune is exposed to an insuperable languor; he sinks under an insupportable weight of ease, and falls a victim to incurable dejection and despondency. Religion, by presenting objects ever interesting and ever new, by bestowing much, by promising more, and dilating the heart with the expectation of a certain *indefinite* good, clearly ascertained, though indistinctly seen, the pledge and earnest of which is far more delightful than all that irreligious men possess, is the only effectual antidote to this evil. *He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst.* The vanity which adheres to the world in every form, when its pleasures and occupations are regarded as *ultimate objects*, is at once corrected when they are viewed in connexion with a boundless futurity; and whatever may be their intrinsic value, they rise into dignity and importance when considered as the seed of a future harvest, as the path which, however obscure, leads to honour and immortality, as the province of labour allotted us, in order to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*. Nothing is little which is related to such a system; nothing vain or frivolous which has the remotest influence on such prospects. Considered as a state of probation, our present condition loses all its inherent meanness; it derives a moral grandeur even from the shortness of its duration, when viewed as a contest for an immortal crown, in which the candidates are exhibited on a theatre, a spectacle to beings of the highest order, who, conscious of the tremendous importance of the issue, of the magnitude of the interest at stake, survey the combatants from on high with benevolent and trembling solicitude.

Finally, we are *made* for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness; it is our high calling and destination; and not to pursue it with diligence, is to be guilty of the blackest ingratitude to the Author of our being, as well as the greatest cruelty to ourselves. To fail of such an object, to defeat the end of our existence, and, in consequence of neglecting the great salvation, to sink at last under the frown of the Al-

mighty is a calamity which words were not invented to express, nor finite minds formed to grasp. Eternity, it is surely not necessary to remind you, invests every state, whether of bliss or of suffering, with a mysterious and awful importance entirely its own, and is the only property in the creation which gives that weight and moment to whatever it attaches, compared to which all sublunary joys and sorrows, all interests which know a period, fade into the most contemptible insignificance. In appreciating every other object, it is easy to exceed the proper estimate; and even of the distressing event which has so recently occurred, the feeling which many of us possess is probably inadequate to the occasion. The nation has certainly not been wanting in the proper expression of its poignant regret at the sudden removal of this most lamented Princess, nor of their sympathy with the royal family, deprived by this visitation of its brightest ornament. Sorrow is painted in every countenance, the pursuits of business and of pleasure have been suspended, and the kingdom is covered with the signals of distress. But what, my brethren, if it be lawful to indulge such a thought, what would be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Where shall we find the tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle? or, could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of commiseration and concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light and the moon her brightness; to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth? or, were the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe?

But it is time to draw the veil over this heart-withering prospect, remembering only *what manner of persons we ought to be*, who are walking on the brink of such an eternity, and possess no assurance but that the next moment will convey us to the regions of happiness or of despair. Impressed habitually with this solemn recollection, we shall *rejoice as those who rejoice not, we shall weep as those who weep not, we shall use the world as not abusing it, remembering that the end of all things is at hand.*

It is scarcely to be supposed that so remarkable an example of the frailty and uncertainty of life as the recent providence

has displayed, has failed of impressing serious reflection on the minds of multitudes; it is difficult to conceive of that degree of insensibility which could totally resist such a warning. But there is reason to fear that in a great majority of instances it has produced no salutary fruit, and will leave them, after a very short period, as careless and unconcerned about a preparation for an hereafter as before; like the unthinking feathered tribe, who, when one of the number falls by the hand of the fowler, are scared for a moment, and fly from the fatal spot with screams of horror, but quickly recovering their confidence, alight again on the same place, and expose themselves to the same danger. Thus many whose gaiety has been eclipsed, and whose thoughtless career of irreligion and dissipation has experienced a momentary check, will doubtless soon return with eager impetuosity to the same course, as *the horse rusheth into battle.* The same amusements will enchant, the same society corrupt, and the same temptations ensnare them; with this very important difference, that the effort necessary to surmount the present impression will superinduce a fresh degree of obduration, by which they will become more completely accoutred in the panoply of darkness. The next visitation, though it may be in some respects more affecting, because more near, will probably impress them less; and as death has penetrated the palace in vain, though it should even come up into their chamber, and take away the delight of their eyes at a stroke, they will be less religiously moved.

What may we suppose is the reason of this; why are so many impressed, and so few profited? It is unquestionably because they are not obedient to the *first* suggestion of conscience. What that suggestion is, it may not be easy precisely to determine; but it certainly is *not* to make haste to efface the impression by frivolous amusement, by gay society, by entertaining reading, or even by secular employment: it is probably to meditate and pray. Let the first whisper, be it what it may, of the internal monitor, be listened to as an oracle, as the still small voice which Elijah heard when he wrapped his face in his mantle, recognising it to be the voice of God. Be assured it will not mislead you; it will conduct you one step at least towards happiness and truth; and, by a prompt and punctual compliance with it, you will be prepared

to receive ampler communications and superior light. If, after a serious retrospect of your past lives, of the objects you have pursued, and the principles which have determined your conduct, they appear to be such as will ill sustain the scrutiny of a dying hour, dare to be faithful to yourselves, and shun with horror that cruel treachery to your best interests, which would impel you to sacrifice the happiness of eternity to the quiet of a moment. Let the light of truth, which is the light of heaven, however painful for the present, be admitted in its full force; and whatever secrets it may discover *in the chambers of imagery*, while it unveils *still greater and greater abominations*, shrink not from the view, but entreat rather the assistance of Him whose prerogative it is to search the heart, and to try the reins, to render the investigation more profound and impartial. The sight of a penitent on his knees is a spectacle which moves heaven; and the compassionate Redeemer, who, when he beheld Saul in that situation, exclaimed, *Behold, he prayeth*, will not be slow or reluctant to strengthen you by his might, and console you by his Spirit. When a *new and living way* is opened *into the holiest of all*, by the blood of Jesus, not to avail ourselves of it, not to arise and go to our Father, but to prefer remaining at a guilty distance, encompassed with famine, to the rich and everlasting provisions of his house, will be a source of insupportable anguish when we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob enter into the kingdom of God, and ourselves shut out. You are probably not aware of what importance it is to improve these sacred visitations; have not considered that they form a crisis, which if often neglected will never return. It is impossible too often to inculcate the momentous truth, that the character is not formed by passive impressions, but by voluntary actions, and that we shall be judged hereafter, not by what we have felt, but by what we have done.

You will perceive, my brethren, that I have confined my attention, in this discourse, to such reflections as we would wish every individual to indulge, in the contemplation of this great national calamity, without adverting to its aspect on the political prospects and interests of the country. The discussion of the subject in that view of it is equally unsuited to my province, and to my talents. I leave it to politicians to investigate the effects it is likely to produce on the prosperity

of the British empire; esteeming myself sufficiently happy if I may be the humble instrument of fixing your attention on subjects best fitted to prepare you for *a kingdom which cannot be moved;* being convinced, as you may infer from my constant practice, that this is neither the place nor the season for political discussion, and that the teachers of religion are called to a nobler occupation than to subserve the interests of a party, or fan the flames of public dissension. In perfect consistence with this observation, permit me to remark, that it appears to me highly presumptuous to attempt to scan the secret purpose of the Deity, in this dispensation, by assigning it to *specific* moral causes. *His ways are in the great deep, and his paths past finding out.* That it ought to be considered as a signal rebuke and chastisement, designed to bring our sins to remembrance, there is no doubt; but to attempt to specify the particular crimes and delinquencies which have drawn down this visitation, is inconsistent with the modesty which ought to accompany all inquiries into the mysteries of Providence; and especially repugnant to the spirit which this most solemn and affecting event should inspire. At a time when every creature ought to tremble under the judgments of God, it ill becomes us to indulge in reciprocal recrimination; and when *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint*, it is not for the members to usurp the seat of judgment, by hurling accusations and reproaches against each other. Are there not sufficient provocations to be found in all ranks and classes, from the lowest to the highest, to justify and account for these and still greater severities? or is it necessary to look farther for the vindication of the equity of the divine proceeding, than to the open impiety and profaneness, the perjury and injustice, the profanation of the sabbath and contempt of sacred things, the profligacy of the lower and the irreligion and impurity of the higher orders, which, notwithstanding the multitude of splendid exceptions, still form the national character?

That we are a people severely scourged and corrected, none will deny; but that we have *turned to him that smiteth us*, it would be presumption to assert. Yet if any people were ever more forcibly reminded of the interposition of Providence than another, it is certain we are that people; having been conducted through the most intricate and mysterious paths,

in such a manner as totally to confound the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent, both in our adverse and prosperous fortunes. Preserved amidst the wreck of nations, and the hurricane of revolution, which swept for twenty years over the face of Europe, with ruin and desolation in its train, we have not only been permitted to maintain our soil unviolated, and our independence unimpaired; but have come forth from a contest of unparalleled difficulty and extent, with a more splendid reputation, and in a more commanding attitude, than we possessed at any former period. Our successes, both by sea and land, have been so brilliant and decisive, that it is not easy to determine whether we have acquired most glory as a military or a maritime power; while our achievements on each element have been such as to distance all competition. A profound peace has at length succeeded to a scene of hostilities, which, for the fourth part of a century, covered the earth with armies, shook every kingdom to its basis, and ravaged and depopulated the fairest portion of the globe. But what has been the issue? We have retired from the combat, successful indeed beyond our most sanguine expectations,—but bleeding, breathless, exhausted; with symptoms of internal weakness and decay, from which, if we ever entirely recover, it must be when the present generation has disappeared from the earth. When was it ever known before that peace was more destructive than war?—that a people were more impoverished by their victories than their defeats? and that the epoch of their glory was the epoch of their sufferings? Peace, instead of being the nurse of industry and the harbinger of plenty, as the experience of ages had taught us to expect, has brought poverty, discontent, and distress in her train; inflicting all the privations of a state of hostility without its hopes; and all the miseries of war without its splendour. What but an Omnipotent hand could have infused such venom into the greatest of blessings as utterly to transform its nature, and cause it to produce some of the worst effects of the curse?

While we were engaged in the fearful struggle which has at length been so successfully terminated, it pleased the great Ruler of nations to visit our aged, beloved, and revered Monarch with one of the most dreadful calamities incident to human nature, the pressure of which still continues, we

fear, with unabated severity. While we are deeply moved at the awful spectacle of majesty labouring under a permanent and hopeless eclipse, we are consoled with the reflection that he walked in the light while he possessed the light; that as long as the exercise of reason was continued he communed with eternal truth; and that from the shades which now envelope him he will, at no very distant period, emerge into the brightness of celestial vision.

Though it may be difficult to conceive of a series of events more likely to awe the mind to a sense of the power and presence of the Deity than those we have witnessed, he has thought fit to address us once more, if not in louder, yet in more solemn and affecting accents. An unexampled depopulation of the species by the sword had indeed nearly rendered death the most familiar of all spectacles, and left few families unbereaved; but neither the narrative of battles, nor the sight of carnage, is best suited to inculcate the lessons of mortality; nor are the moral features of that last enemy ever less distinctly discerned, than in the moments when he is most busy; or on those fields of slaughter, where he appears the principal agent. The "pomp and circumstance of war," the tumultuous emotions of the combatants, and the eager anxiety of the contending parties, attentive to the important political consequences attached to victory and defeat, absorb every other impression, and obstruct the entrance of serious and pensive reflection.

How different the example of mortality presented on the present occasion! Without the slightest warning, without the opportunity of a moment's immediate preparation, in the midst of the deepest tranquillity, at midnight a voice was heard in the palace, not of singing men and singing women, not of revelry and mirth, but the cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh.* The mother, in the bloom of youth, spared just long enough to hear the tidings of her infant's death, almost immediately, as if summoned by his spirit, follows him into eternity. "It is a night much to be remembered." Who foretold this event, who conjectured it, who detected at a distance the faintest presage of its approach, which, when it arrived, mocked the efforts of human skill, as much by their incapacity to prevent, as their inability to foresee it? Unmoved by the tears of conjugal affection, unawed by the

presence of grandeur, and the prerogatives of power, inexorable Death hastened to execute his stern commission, leaving nothing to royalty itself, but to retire and weep. Who can fail to discern on this awful occasion, the hand of Him, who *bringeth princes to nothing, who maketh the judges of the earth as vanity; who says, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble?*

It is better, says Solomon, *to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart.* While there are few who are not, at some season or other, conducted to that house, *a nation* enters it on the present visitation, there to learn, in the sudden extinction of the heiress of her monarchy, the vanity of all but what relates to eternity, and the absolute necessity of having our *loins girt, our lamps burning, and ourselves as those who are looking for the coming of the Bridegroom.*

We presume there are none who can survey this signal interposition of Providence with indifference, or refrain from "laying it to heart." No, illustrious Princess, it will be long ere the name of Charlotte Augusta is mentioned by Britons without tears: remote posterity also, which shall peruse thy melancholy story, will "lay it to heart," and will be tempted to ask, why no milder expedient could suffice to correct our levity, and make us mindful of our latter end; while they look back with tender pity on the amiable victim, who seems to have been destined, by the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, to warn and edify that people by her death, which she was not permitted, to the extent of her ambition, to benefit by her life.

Should her lamented and untimely end be the means of giving that religious impulse to the public mind, which shall turn us to righteousness, the benefits she will have conferred upon her country, in both worlds, will more than equal the glories of the most prosperous and extended reign.

ARTICLES

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REVIEW

OF

FOSTER'S ESSAYS.

Essays, in a series of Letters, on the following subjects:—On a Man's writing Memoirs of himself—On Decision of Character—On the application of the Epithet Romantic—On some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered less acceptable to Persons of cultivated Taste. By JOHN FOSTER. 2 vols. 12mo. 1805. 1 vol. 8vo. pp. 458. Seventh Edition, 1823.

THE authors who have written on human nature may be properly distinguished into two classes, the metaphysical and the popular. The former contemplate man in the abstract; and, neglecting the different shades of character and peculiarities of temper by which mankind are diversified, confine their attention to those fundamental principles which pervade the whole species. In attempting to explore the secrets of mental organization, they assume nothing more for a basis than a mere susceptibility of impression, whence they labour to deduce the multiplied powers of the human mind. The light in which they choose to consider man in their researches, is not that of a being possessed already of the exercise of reason, and agitated by various sentiments and passions, but simply as capable of acquiring them; and their object is, by an accurate investigation of the laws which regulate the connexion of the mind with the external universe, to discover in what manner they are actually acquired. They endeavour to trace back every mental appearance to its source. Considering the powers and principles of the mind as a complicated piece of machinery, they attempt to discover the *primum mobile*, or in other words, that primary law, that ultimate fact which is sufficiently comprehensive to account for every other movement. This attention to the internal operations of the mind, with a view to analyse its principles, is one of the distinctions of modern times. Among the

ancients, scarcely anything of this sort was known. Comprehensive theories, and subtle disquisitions, are not unfrequent in their writings; but they are chiefly employed for the illustration of different modes of virtue, and the establishment of different ideas of the supreme good. Their most abstracted speculations had almost always a practical tendency. The schoolmen, indeed, were deeply immersed in metaphysical speculations. They fatigued their readers in the pursuit of endless abstractions and distinctions; but the design, even of these writers, seems rather to have been accurately to arrange and define the objects of thought, than to explore the mental faculties themselves. The nature of particular and universal ideas, time, space, infinity, together with the mode of existence to be ascribed to the Supreme Being, chiefly engaged the attention of the mightiest minds in the middle ages. Acute in the highest degree, and endued with a wonderful patience of thinking, they yet, by a mistaken direction of their powers, wasted themselves in endless logomachies, and displayed more of a teasing subtlety than of philosophical depth. They chose rather to strike into the dark and intricate by-paths of metaphysical science, than to pursue a career of useful discovery: and as their disquisitions were neither adorned by taste, nor reared on a basis of extensive knowledge, they gradually fell into neglect, when juster views in philosophy made their appearance. Still, they will remain a mighty monument of the utmost which the mind of man can accomplish in the field of abstraction. If the metaphysician does not find in the schoolmen the materials of his work, he will perceive the study of their writings to be of excellent benefit in sharpening his tools. They will aid his acuteness, though they may fail to enlarge his knowledge.

When the inductive and experimental philosophy, recommended by Bacon, had, in the hands of Boyle and Newton, led to such brilliant discoveries in the investigation of matter, an attempt was soon made to transfer the same method of proceeding to the mind. Hobbes, a man justly infamous for his impiety, but of extraordinary penetration, first set the example; which was not long after followed by Locke, who was more indebted to his predecessor than he had the candour to acknowledge. His celebrated Essay has been generally con-

sidered as the established code of metaphysics. The opinions and discoveries of this great man have since been enriched by large accessions, and, on some points, corrected and amended, by the labours of Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and a multitude of other writers. Still, there seems to be a principle of mortality inherent in metaphysical science, which, sooner or later, impairs the reputation of its most distinguished adepts. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that there has never been a reputation of this kind which has continued with undiminished lustre through the revolutions of a century. The fame of Locke is visibly on the decline; the speculations of Malebranche are scarcely heard of in France; and Kant, the greatest metaphysical name on the continent, sways a doubtful sceptre amidst a host of opponents. It is not our intention to inquire at large into the reason of the transitory fame acquired by this class of writers. Whether it be that the science itself rests on a precarious foundation; that its discoveries can never be brought to a decisive test; that it is too remote from the business of life to be generally interesting; that it does not compensate by its use, for its defect in the fascinations of pleasure; and that it is not, like the intricacies of law, interwoven with the institutions of society: the fact itself is unquestionable. He who aspires to a reputation that shall survive the vicissitudes of opinion and of time, must aim at some other character than that of a metaphysician.

Grand and imposing in its appearance, it seems to lay claim to universal empire, and to supply the measures and the criteria of all other knowledge; but it resembles in its progress the conquests of a Sesostris and a Bacchus, who overran kingdoms and provinces with ease, but made no permanent settlements, and soon left no trace of their achievements.

The case is very different with the popular writers, who, without attempting to form a theory, or to trace to their first elements the vast assemblage of passions and principles which enter into the composition of man, are satisfied with describing him as he is. These writers exhibit characters, paint manners, and display human nature in those natural and affecting lights, under which it will always appear to the eye of an acute and feeling observer. Without staying to in-

quire why it is that men think, feel, reason, remember,—are attracted by some objects or repelled by others, they take them as they are, and delineate the infinitely various modifications and appearances assumed by our essential nature. From the general mass of human passions and manners, they detach such portions as they suppose will admit of the most beautiful illustrations, or afford the most instructive lessons. Next to a habit of self-reflection, accompanied with an attentive survey of real life, writers of this kind are the best guides in the acquisition of that most important branch of knowledge, an acquaintance with mankind. As they profess to consider human nature under some particular aspect, their views are necessarily more limited than those of metaphysical writers; but if they are less extensive, they are more certain; if they occupy less ground, they cultivate it better. In the language of Bacon, "they come home to men's business and bosom." As they aim at the delineation of living nature, they can never deviate far from truth and reality without becoming ridiculous; while, for the fidelity of their representations, they appeal to the common sense of mankind, the dictates of which they do little more than embody and adorn. The system of Locke or of Hartley, it is possible to conceive, may be exploded by the prevalence of a different theory; but it is absurd to suppose, that the remarks on life and manners contained in the writings of Addison, or of Johnson, can ever be discredited by a future moralist. In the formation of a theory, more especially in matters so subtle and complicated as those which relate to the mind, the sources of error are various. When a chain of reasoning consists of many links, a failure of connexion in any part will produce a mass of error in the result, proportioned to the length to which it is extended. In a complicated combination, if the enumeration of particulars in the outset is not complete, the mistake is progressive and incurable. In the ideal philosophy of Locke, for example, if the sources of sensation are not sufficiently explored, or if there be, as some of the profoundest thinkers have suspected, other sources of ideas than those of sensation, the greater part of his system falls to the ground. The popular writers, of whom we have been speaking, are not exposed to such dangers. It is possible, indeed, that many particular views

may be erroneous; but, as their attention is continually turned to living nature, provided they be possessed of competent talents, their general delineations cannot fail of being distinguished by fidelity and truth. While a few speculative men amuse themselves with discussing the comparative merits of different metaphysical systems, these are the writers whose sentiments, conveyed through innumerable channels, form the spirit of the age; nor is it to be doubted, that the Spectator and the Rambler have imparted a stronger impulse to the public mind than all the metaphysical systems in the world. On this account we are highly gratified when we meet with a writer who, to a vein of profound and original thought, together with just views of religion and of morals, joins the talent of recommending his ideas by the graces of imagination, and the powers of eloquence. Such a writer we have the happiness of reviewing at present. Mr. Foster's name is probably new to most of our readers; but, if we may judge from the production before us, he cannot long be concealed from the notice and applause of the literary world. In an age of mediocrity, when the writing of books has become almost a mechanical art, and a familiar acquaintance with the best models has diffused taste, and diminished genius, it is impossible to peruse an author who displays so great original powers without a degree of surprise. We are ready to inquire by what peculiar felicity he was enabled to desert the trammels of custom, to break the spell by which others feel themselves bound, and to maintain a career so perfectly uncontrolled and independent. A cast of thought original and sublime, an unlimited command of imagery, a style varied, vigorous, and bold, are some of the distinguishing features of these very singular Essays. We add, with peculiar satisfaction, that they breathe the spirit of piety and benevolence, and bear the most evident indications of a heart deeply attached to Scriptural truths. Though Mr. F. has thought fit to give to his work the title of 'Essays, in a series of *Letters*,' the reader must not expect anything in the epistolary style. They were written, the author informs us, in letters to a friend, but with a view to publication; and in their distinct developement of a subject, and fulness of illustration, they resemble regular dissertations, rather than familiar epistles. We could have wished, indeed, that

he had suppressed the title of Letters, as it may excite in the reader an expectation of colloquial ease and grace, which will not be gratified in the perusal. A little attention to this circumstance, though it might have impaired the regularity of their method, would have rendered them more fascinating. The subjects appear to us well chosen, sufficiently uncommon to afford scope for original remarks, and important enough to call forth the exertions of the strongest powers. They are the following: 1. On a Man's writing Memoirs of himself: 2. On Decision of Character: 3. On the application of the Epithet Romantic: 4. On some of the Causes by which Evangelical religion has been rendered less acceptable to persons of cultivated Taste.

We shall endeavour to give our readers an idea of the general design of each of these essays; and to enable them, by a few extracts, to judge of the manner in which that design is executed.

In the first essay, the author expatiates at large on the influence of external events in the formation of character. This influence he traces to four sources; instruction, companionship, reading, and attention to the state and manners of mankind.

Among the many objects calculated to form the character and impress the heart, Mr. F. enumerates natural scenery; at the same time deploring that want of fancy and sensibility which often renders it productive of so little effect. The passage in which he adverts to this subject is so beautiful, that we cannot prevail on ourselves to withhold it from the reader. He will see at once that the writer has viewed nature with the eye of a poet, and has deeply imbibed the delicious enchantment which he so eloquently describes.

" It might be supposed that the scenes of nature, an amazing " assemblage of phenomena, if their effect were not lost through " familiarity, would have a powerful influence on all opening " minds, and transfuse into the internal economy of ideas and " sentiment something of a character and a colour correspon- " dent to the beauty, vicissitude, and grandeur which con- " tinually press on the senses. On minds of genius they often " have this effect; and Beattie's *Minstrel* may be as just as it " is a fascinating description of such a spirit. But on the " greatest number this influence operates feebly; you will not

"see the process in children, nor the result in mature persons. "The charms of nature are objects only of sight and hearing, "not of sensibility and imagination; and even the sight and "hearing do not receive impressions sufficiently distinct or "forcible for clear recollection; it is not, therefore, strange "that these impressions seldom go so much deeper than the "senses as to awaken pensiveness or enthusiasm, and fill the "mind with an interior permanent scenery of beautiful images "at its own command. This defect of fancy and sensibility "is unfortunate amidst a creation infinitely rich with grand "and beautiful objects, which, imparting something more than "images to a mind adapted and habituated to converse with "nature, inspire an exquisite sentiment that seems like the "emanation of a spirit residing in them. It is unfortunate, I "have thought within these few minutes, while looking out "on one of the most enchanting nights of the most interesting "season of the year, and hearing the voices of a company of "persons, to whom I can perceive that this soft and solemn "shade over the earth, the calm sky, the beautiful stripes of "cloud, the stars and waning moon just risen, are things not "in the least more interesting than the walls, ceiling, and "candle-light of a room."—Vol. I. pp. 26, 27. [Pp. 22, 23, *Seventh Edition.*]

Towards the close of the essay, in tracing the steps by which some have arrived at the last stage of daring impiety, the denial of a God, the author evinces, in a masterly manner, the presumption of the atheist, and places the extreme absurdity of pretending to demonstrate the non-existence of a Deity, in a light in which we do not remember to have seen it exhibited. Speaking of a pretended heroism attached to atheistic impiety, he adds:—

"But, indeed, it is heroism no longer, if he *knows* that there "is no God. The wonder then turns on the great process by "which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that "can know that there is no God. What ages, and what lights "are requisite for THIS attainment! This intelligence involves "the very attributes of divinity, while a God is denied. For "unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment "in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there "may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which "even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know ab-

" solutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does " not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent " in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is " so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all " the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one " which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot, " with certainty, assign the cause of all that exists, that cause " may be a God. If he does not know everything that has " been done in the immeasureable ages that are past, some " things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he " knows all things, that is precludes another Deity by being " one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose exist- " ence he rejects does not exist. But he must *know* that he " does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compas- " sion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejec- " tion, and acts accordingly."—Vol. I. pp. 60-62. [Pp. 48, 49, *Seventh Edition.*]

The next essay, *On Decision of Character*, appears to us superior to the former. The subject is pursued with greater regularity, the conceptions are more profound, and the style is more chaste and classical. After placing in strong contrast the features of a decisive and of an irresolute character, he proceeds to analyse the elements of which the former is composed. Among these, he assigns the first place to a firm confidence in our own judgment; which, he justly observes, notwithstanding the general disposition of mankind to overrate their powers, is no common attainment. With those who are most disposed to think highly of their own abilities, it is common, when they arrive at the moment of action, to distrust their judgment; and, as the author beautifully expresses it, " their mind seems all at once placed in a misty vacuity, where it reaches round on all sides, and finds nothing to lay hold of." The next ingredient essential to decision of character is a state of cogent feeling, an intense ardour of mind, precluding indifference and delay. In addition to these qualities courage is required, without which it is obvious that resolutions the most maturely formed, are liable to vanish at the first breath of opposition. In the remaining part of the essay, Mr. F. illustrates the influence of several circumstances of an external nature, which tend to form or to augment the quality of which he has been treating The principal of these are

opposition, *desertion*, and *success*. It would prolong this article too much to attempt to follow the author in these particulars; suffice it to remark, that under each of them will be found many just and important observations. He concludes with briefly recommending a discipline conducive to the attainment of a decisive character. He particularly insists on the propriety of inuring the mind to a habit of reasoning; and that not in a superficial and desultory manner, but by steadily following the train till we reach a legitimate conclusion.

We cannot dismiss this part of the work without presenting our readers with an extract from the character of Howard, whose virtues have been emblazoned by the gorgeous eloquence of Burke; but we are mistaken if they have ever been painted in a more masterly manner than in the following portrait:—

"In this distinction (*decision*) no man ever exceeded, for "instance, or ever will exceed, the late illustrious Howard. "The energy of his determination was so great, that if instead "of being habitual it had been shown only for a short time, "on particular occasions, it would have appeared a vehement "impetuosity; but by being unintermitted it had an equability "of manner which scarcely appeared to exceed the tone of a "calm constancy, it was so totally the reverse of anything like "turbulence or agitation. It was the calmness of an intensity, kept uniform by the nature of the human mind for-"bidding it to be more, and by the character of the individual "forbidding it to be less. The habitual passion of his mind "was a measure of feeling almost equal to the temporary ex-"tremes and paroxysms of common minds: as a great river "in its customary state is equal to a small or moderate one "when swollen to a torrent. The moment of finishing his "plans in deliberation, and commencing them in action, was "the same. I wonder what must have been the amount of "that bribe, in emolument or pleasure, that would have de-"tained him a week inactive after their final adjustment. The "law which carries water down a declivity, was not more un-"conquerable and invariable than the determination of his "feelings towards the main object. The importance of this "object held his faculties in a state of excitement which was "too rigid to be affected by lighter interests, and on which, "therefore, the beauties of nature and of art had no power. "He had no leisure feeling which he could spare to be di-

" verted among the innumerable varieties of the extensive " scene which he traversed; all his subordinate feelings lost " their separate existence and operation by falling into the " grand one. There have not been wanting trivial minds to " mark this as a fault in his character. But the mere men of " taste ought to be silent respecting such a man as Howard; " he is above their sphere of judgment. The invisible spirits, " who fulfil their commission of philanthropy among mortals, " do not care about pictures, statues, and sumptuous buildings; " and no more did he, when the time in which he must have " inspected and admired them would have been taken from " the work to which he had consecrated his life.* The cu- " riosity which he might feel was reduced to wait till the " hour should arrive when its gratification should be presented " by conscience, which kept a scrupulous charge of all his " time, as the most sacred duty of that hour. If he was still, " at every hour when it came, fated to feel the attractions of " the fine arts but the second claim, they might be sure of " their revenge; for no other man will ever visit Rome under " such a despotic consciousness of duty, as to refuse himself " time for surveying the magnificence of its ruins. Such a sin " against taste is very far beyond the reach of common saint- " ship to commit. It implied an inconceivable severity of " conviction that he had *one thing to do;* and that he who " would do some great thing in this short life, must apply " himself to the work with such a concentration of his forces " as, to idle spectators, who live only to amuse themselves, " looks like insanity. His attention was so strongly and te- " naciously fixed on his object, that, even at the greatest dis- " tance, as the Egyptian pyramids to travellers, it appeared to " him with a luminous distinctness as if it were nigh, and be- " guiled the toilsome length of labour and enterprise by which " he was to reach it. It was so conspicuous before him, that " not a step deviated from the direction, and every move- " ment and every day was an approximation. As his method " referred everything he did and thought to the end, and as " his exertion did not relax for a moment, he made the trial " so seldom made—what is the utmost effect which may be

* Mr. Howard, however, was not destitute of taste for the fine arts. His house at Cardington was better filled with paintings and drawings than any other, on a small scale, that we ever saw.—Rev.

"granted to the last possible efforts of a human agent; and, "therefore, what he did not accomplish he might conclude to "be placed beyond the sphere of mortal activity, and calmly "leave to the immediate disposal of Providence."—Pp. 156-160. [Pp. 125-128, *Seventh Edition.*]

We have one remark to make before we conclude our review of this Essay. We are a little apprehensive that the glowing colours in which the imagination of Mr. F. has painted an unyielding constancy of mind may tend to seduce some of his readers into an intemperate admiration of that quality, without duly distinguishing the object to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is sustained. We give our author full credit for the purity of his principles; we are firmly persuaded that he is not to be classed among the impious idolaters of mental energy. But we could wish that he had more fully admonished his readers to regard resolution of character not as a virtue, so much as a means of virtue—a mere instrument that owes its value entirely to the purpose to which it is employed; and that, wherever nature has conferred it, an additional obligation is imposed of purifying the principles and regulating the heart. It might, at first view, be thought impossible, as Mr. F. intimates, that men should be found who are as resolute in the prosecution of criminal enterprises, as they could be supposed to be in the pursuit of the most virtuous objects. It is surely a melancholy proof of something wrong in the constitution of human nature, that a quality so important as that of energetic decision is so little under the regulation of principle; that constancy is so much more frequently to be seen in what is wrong than in what is right; and, in fine, that the *world* can boast so many more heroes than the *church*.

In the third Essay, *On the Application of the Epithet Romantic*, Mr. Foster takes occasion to expose the eagerness with which terms of censure are adopted by men, who, instead of calmly weighing the merits of an undertaking, or a character, think it sufficient to express their antipathy by some opprobrious appellation. The epithet *romantic* holds a distinguished place in the vocabulary of contempt. If a scheme of action, which it requires much benevolence to conceive, and much vigour to execute, be proposed, by many it will be thought completely exploded, when they have branded it

with the appellation of *romantic*. Thus selfishness and indolence, arraying themselves in the garb of wisdom, assume the pride of superiority, when they ought to feel the humiliation of guilt. To imitate the highest examples, to do good in ways not usual to the same rank of life, to make great exertions and sacrifices in the cause of religion and with a view to eternal happiness, to determine without delay, to reduce to practice whatever we applaud in theory, are modes of conduct which the world will generally condemn as romantic, but which this author shows to be founded on the highest reason. In unfolding the true idea of the *romantic*, as applicable to a train of sentiments, or course of conduct, he ascribes whatever may be justly so denominated, to the predominance of the imagination over the other powers. He points out the symptoms of this disease, as apparent—in the expectation of a peculiar destiny, while the fancy paints to itself scenes of unexampled felicity—in overlooking the relation which subsists between ends and means—in counting upon casualties instead of contemplating the stated order of events,—and in hoping to realize the most momentous projects, without any means at all, or by means totally inadequate to the effect. Some of the illustrations which the author introduces in this part of his subject are peculiarly happy. We are delighted to find him treating with poignant ridicule those superficial pretenders, who, without positively disavowing any dependence on divine agency, hope to reform the world, and to bring back a paradisaical state, by the mere force of moral instruction. For the prospect of the general prevalence of virtue and happiness, we are indebted to revelation. We have no reason to suppose the minds of our modern infidels sufficiently elevated to have thought of the cessation of wars, and the universal diffusion of peace and love, but for the information which they have obtained from the Scriptures. From these they derived the doctrine of a millennium; and they have received it, as they have done everything else, only to corrupt it: for, exploding all the means by which the Scriptures have taught us to expect the completion of this event, they rely merely on the resources of reason and philosophy. They impiously deck themselves with the spoils of Revelation, and take occasion, from the hopes and prospects which she alone supplies, to deride her assistance, and to idolize the powers of

human nature. That Being, who planted Christianity by miraculous interposition, and by the effusion of his Spirit produced such effects in the hearts of millions, as afford a specimen and a pledge of an entire renovation, has also assured us, that violence and injustice shall cease, and that *none shall hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God.* But, it seems, Revelation is to have no concern in this work; philosophy is to effect everything; and we are to look to the Political Justice of Godwin, and the Moral Code of Volney, for that which Christians were so weak as to expect at the hand of Deity.

The conclusion which our author draws from the insufficiency of mere human agency to effect that great renovation in the character and condition of men, which revelation teaches us to expect, is most just and consolatory. We should have been happy to transcribe the passage; but, lest we should exceed our limits, we refer our readers to Vol. II. pp. 87, 88. [Pp. 244—247, *Seventh Edition.*]

The last Essay in these volumes attempts to assign *some of the causes that have rendered evangelical religion less acceptable to persons of cultivated taste.* This essay is the most elaborate. Aware of the delicacy and difficulty of his subject the author seems to have summoned all the powers of his mind to enable him to grasp it in all its extent, and to present it in all its force and beauty. This essay is itself sufficient, in our opinion, to procure the author a brilliant and lasting reputation.

It is proper to remind our readers, that, in tracing the causes which have tended to produce in men of taste an aversion to evangelical religion, Mr. F. avowedly confines himself to those which are of a *subordinate* class, while he fully admits the *primary cause* to be that *inherent corruption* of nature, which renders men strongly indisposed to any communication from heaven. We could, however, have wished that he had insisted on this more largely. The Scriptures ascribe the rejection of the Gospel to one general principle: *the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The peculiar doctrines of Christianity are distinguished by a spirit irreconcilably at variance with that of the world. The

deep repentance it enjoins strikes at the pride and levity of the human heart. The mystery of an incarnate and crucified Saviour must necessarily confound the reason, and shock the prejudices, of a mind which will admit nothing that it cannot perfectly reduce to the principles of philosophy. The whole tenour of the life of Christ, the objects he pursued, and the profound humiliation he exhibited, must convict of madness and folly the favourite pursuits of mankind. The virtues usually practised in society, and the models of excellence most admired there, are so remote from that holiness which is enjoined in the New Testament, that it is impossible for a taste which is formed on the one to perceive the charms of the other. The happiness which it proposes in a union with God, and a participation of the image of Christ, is so far from being congenial to the inclinations of worldly men, that it can scarcely be mentioned without exciting their ridicule and scorn. General speculations on the Deity have much to amuse the mind, and to gratify that appetite for the wonderful which thoughtful and speculative men are delighted to indulge. Religion, viewed in this light, appears more in the form of an exercise to the understanding, than a law to the heart. Here the soul expatiates at large, without feeling itself controlled or alarmed. But when evangelical truths are presented, they bring God so near, if we may be allowed the expression, and speak with so commanding a voice to the conscience, that they leave no alternative but that of submissive acquiescence or proud revolt. As men of taste are, for the most part, men of the world, not at all distinguished from others by a greater familiarity with religious ideas, these observations are applicable to them in their utmost extent.

Though we thought it right to suggest these hints, we wish not to be understood to convey any censure on Mr. F. for confining his attention principally to other topics. In discussing more fully and profoundly some of the subordinate causes, which have come in aid of the primary one, to render men of cultivated taste averse to evangelical piety, we think he has rendered an important service to the public.

The first cause he assigns is, that of its being the religion of many weak and uncultivated minds; in consequence of which it becomes inseparably associated, in the conceptions of many, with the intellectual poverty of its disciples, so as to

wear a mean and degraded aspect. We regret that we cannot follow the author in his illustration of this topic. We must be content with observing, that he has exposed the weakness of this prejudice in a most masterly and triumphant manner.

The second cause which the author assigns as having had, in his opinion, a considerable influence in prejudicing elegant and cultivated minds against evangelical piety, is the peculiarity of language adopted in the discourses and books of its teachers, the want of a more classical form of diction, and the profusion of words and phrases which are of a technical and systematical cast.

We are inclined to think, with Mr. F., that the cause of religion has suffered considerably from the circumstance here mentioned. The superabundance of phrases appropriated by some pious authors to the subject of religion, and never applied to any other purpose, has not only the effect of disgusting persons of taste, but of obscuring religion itself. As they are seldom defined, and never exchanged for equivalent words, they pass current without being understood. They are not the vehicle,—they are the substitute of thought. Among a certain description of Christians, they become, by degrees, regarded with a mystic awe, insomuch that if a writer expressed the very same ideas in different phrases, he would be condemned as a heretic. To quit the magical circle of words, in which many Christians suffer themselves to be confined, excites as great a clamour as the boldest innovation in sentiment. Controversies, which have been agitated with much warmth, might often have been amicably adjusted, or even finally decided, could the respective partisans have been prevailed upon to lay aside their predilection for phrases, and honestly resolve to examine their real import. In defiance of the dictates of candour and good sense, these have been obstinately retained, and have usually been the refuge of ignorance, the apple of discord, and the watchwords of religious hostility. In some instances, the evil which we lament has sprung from a more amiable cause. The force and solemnity of devotional feelings are such, that they seem to consecrate everything with which they have been connected; and as the bulk of pious people have received their religious impressions from teachers more distinguished for their simplicity and zeal than for comprehension of mind

and copiousness of language, they learn to annex an idea of sanctity to that set of phrases with which they have been most familiar. These become the current language of religion, to which subsequent writers conform, partly, perhaps, from indolence, and partly from the fear of offending their brethren.

To these causes we may add the contentious and sectarian spirit of modern times, which has taught the different parties of Christians to look on one another with an unnatural horror, to apprehend contamination from the very phrases employed by each other, and to invent, each for itself, a dialect as narrow and exclusive as their whimsical singularities. But while we concur, in the main, with Mr. F. on this subject, we are disposed to think that he has carried his representations too far, both with respect to the magnitude of the abuse itself, and the probable advantages which would ensue on its removal. The repugnance of the human mind, in its unenlightened state, to the peculiarities of the Christian doctrine is such, that we have little hope of its yielding to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. Till it is touched and humbled by grace, we are apprehensive that it will retain its aversion, and not suffer itself to be cheated into an approbation of the Gospel by any artifice of words. Exhibit evangelical religion in what colours you will, the worldly-minded and the careless will shrink from the obtrusion of unwelcome ideas. Cowper has become, in spite of his religion, a popular poet, but his success has not been such as to make religion popular; nor have the gigantic genius and fame of Milton shielded from the ridicule and contempt of his admirers that system of religion which he beheld with awful adoration.

In treating subjects properly theological, we apprehend, great caution should be used not to deviate wantonly and unnecessarily from the phraseology of Scripture. The apostle tells us, that in preaching the Gospel he did not use the enticing words of man's wisdom, but such words as the Holy Ghost taught him. We do not, indeed, contend that in the choice of every particular word or phrase he was immediately inspired; but we think it reasonable to believe that the unction which was on his heart, and the perfect illumination that he possessed, led him to employ such terms in the statement of the mysteries of Christianity as were better adapted

than any others to convey their real import, which we are the more inclined to conclude, from observing the sameness of phraseology which pervades the writings of the apostles, when they are treating on the same subject. As the truths which the revelation of the New Testament unfolds are perfectly original, and transcendantly important, it might naturally be expected that the communication of them would give birth to an original cast of phraseology, or, in other words, a steady adherence to certain terms, in order to render the ideas which they convey fixed, precise, and unchangeable.

In teaching the principles of every science, it is found necessary to select or invent terms, which, though originally of a laxer signification, are afterwards restricted and confined *to one peculiar modification of thought*, and constitute the technical language of that science. Such terms are always capable of being defined (for mere words convey nothing to the mind); but to substitute a definition in their place would be tedious circumlocution, and to exchange the term itself for a different one would frequently lead to dangerous mistakes.

In the original elementary parts of a language, there are, in truth, few or no synonymes; for what should prompt men, in the early period of literature, to invent a word that neither conveyed any new idea, nor enabled them to present an old one with more force and precision? In the progress of refinement, indeed, regard to copiousness and harmony has enriched language with many exotics, which are merely those words in a foreign language that perfectly correspond to terms in our own; as *felicity* for *happiness*, *celestial* for *heavenly*, and a multitude of others. Since, then, the nature of language is such that no two terms are exactly of the same force and import (except in the case last mentioned), we cannot but apprehend that dangerous consequences would result from a studied attempt to vary from the standard phraseology, where the statement of doctrines is concerned, and that, by changing the terms, the ideas themselves might be changed or mutilated. In teaching a religion designed for the use and benefit of all mankind, it is certainly desirable that the technical words, the words employed in a peculiar and appropriate sense, should be few; but to fix and perpetuate the ideas, and to preserve *the faith once delivered to the saints*, from the caprices of fancy, and the dangers of

innovation, it seems necessary that there should be some. We are inclined to think, that in inculcating Christian morality, and in appeals and addresses to the heart, a much greater latitude may be safely indulged than in the statement of *peculiar doctrines;* and that a more bold and varied diction, with a wider range of illustration and allusion than is usually employed, would often be attended with the happiest effect. Mr. Foster has given, in many parts of these volumes, beautiful specimens of what we intend.

With respect to the copious use of Scripture language, which Mr. F. condemns (in our opinion with too much severity), as giving an uncouth and barbarous air to theological books, we prefer a middle course; without applauding the excess to which it is carried by many pious writers, on the one hand; or wishing it to be kept so entirely apart as Mr. F. contends for, on the other. To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered it a literary view, which are universally acknowledged, it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolations. Intimately associated in his mind with every thing dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other; and when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse, which nothing else can supply. Besides, is there not room to apprehend that a studied avoidance of the Scripture phraseology, and a care to express all that it is supposed to contain in the forms of classical diction, might ultimately lead to a neglect of the Scriptures themselves, and a habit of substituting flashy and superficial declamation in the room of the saving truths of the Gospel? Such an apprehension is but too much verified by the most celebrated sermons of the French; and still more by some modern compositions in our own language, which usurp that title. For devotional impression, we conceive that a very considerable tincture of the language of the Scriptures, or at least such a colouring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best.

It is impossible to establish a universal rule, since different methods are equally adapted to different purposes; and therefore, we are willing to allow with Mr. F that, where the

fashionable and the gay are addressed, and the prejudices arising from a false refinement are to be conciliated, whatever in the diction might repel by an appearance of singularity should be carefully shunned. Accordingly, we equally admire, in *The Rise and Progress of Religion*, by Dr. Doddridge, and in *The Rural Philosophy* of Mr. Bates, the dexterity with which these excellent writers have suited their composition to their respective classes of readers. On the whole, let it once for all be remembered, that men of taste form a very small part of the community, of no greater consequence in the eyes of their Creator than others; that the end of all religious discourse is the salvation of souls; and that to a mind which justly estimates the weight of eternal things, it will appear a greater honour to have converted a sinner from the error of his way, than to have wielded the thunder of a Demosthenes, or to have kindled the flame of a Cicero.

We hasten to close this article by making a few observations on the last cause which our author has assigned for the general distaste that persons of polite and elegant attainments usually discover toward evangelical religion. This is the neglect and contempt with which it has been almost constantly treated by our fine writers; of whose delinquency, in this respect, the author takes a wide and extensive survey, exposing their criminality with a force of eloquence that has perhaps never before been exerted on this subject. Though his attention is chiefly directed to the influence of modern literature, yet, as the writings of the ancients, and especially of the poets, have had a powerful operation in forming the taste and sentiments of succeeding generations, he has extended his notice to these, and has made some most striking animadversions on the ancient authors of the epopœia, and particularly on Homer.

We must do justice to his intrepidity in venturing to attack the idol of all classical scholars: nor can he have failed to foresee the manner in which it would be attempted to be repelled. They will remind him, that the lawfulness of defensive war has seldom been called in question; that the one in which Homer's heroes were engaged was not only just, but meritorious, being undertaken to avenge a most signal affront and injury; that no subject could be more suited to the epic muse, either on account of its magnitude or the deep interest

it excited; that having chosen it, the poet is to be commended for throwing into it all the fire of which it was susceptible; that to cherish in the breasts of youth a gallant and warlike spirit is the surest defence of nations; and that this spirit, under proper regulations, constitutes that θυμοειδης which Plato extols so highly in his Republic, as the basis of a manly, heroic character. This, and much more than this, will be said: but when our Grecians have spent all their arrows, it will remain an incontestable fact that an enthusiastic admiration of the Iliad of Homer is but a bad preparation for relishing the beauties of the New Testament. What then is to be done? Shall we abandon the classics, and devote ourselves solely to the perusal of modern writers, where the maxims inculcated, and the principles taught, are little, if at all, more in unison with those of Christianity?—a fact which Mr. F. acknowledges and deplores. While things continue as they are, we are apprehensive, therefore, that we should gain nothing by neglecting the unrivalled productions of genius left us by the ancients, but a deterioration of taste, without any improvement in religion. The evil is not to be corrected by any partial innovation of this kind. Until a more Christian spirit pervades the world, we are inclined to think that the study of the classics is, on the whole, advantageous to public morals, by inspiring an elegance of sentiment and an elevation of soul, which we should in vain seek for elsewhere.

The total inattention of the great majority of our fine writers to all the distinguishing features of the religion they profess affords a most melancholy reflection. It has no doubt excited the notice of many, and has been deeply lamented; but it has never been placed in a light so serious and affecting as in the volumes before us. In the observations which our author makes on the Essay on Man, we are delighted and surprised to find at once so much philosophical truth and poetical beauty. His critique on the writings of Addison and Johnson evinces deep penetration; and, as it respects the former, is uncommonly impressive and important.

We take our leave of this work with sincere reluctance. For the length to which we have extended our review, the subject must be our apology. It has fared with us as with a traveller who passes through an enchanting country, where

he meets with so many beautiful views and so many striking objects which he is loath to quit, that he loiters till the shades of evening insensibly fall upon him. We are far, however, from recommending these volumes as faultless. Mr. F.'s work is rather an example of the power of genius than a specimen of finished composition: it lies open in many points to the censure of those minor critics, who, by the observation of a few technical rules, may easily avoid its faults, without reaching one of its beauties. The author has paid too little attention to the construction of his sentences. They are for the most part too long, sometimes involved in perplexity, and often loaded with redundances. They have too much of the looseness of an harangue, and too little of the compact elegance of regular composition. An occasional obscurity pervades some parts of the work. The mind of the writer seems at times to struggle with conceptions too mighty for his grasp, and to present confused masses, rather than distinct delineations of thought. This, however, is to be imputed to the originality, not the weakness, of his powers. The scale on which he thinks is so vast, and the excursions of his imagination are so extended, that they frequently carry him into the most unbeaten track, and among objects where a ray of light glances in an angle only, without diffusing itself over the whole. On ordinary topics his conceptions are luminous in the highest degree. He places the idea which he wishes to present in such a flood of light, that it is not merely visible itself, but it seems to illumine all around it. He paints metaphysics, and has the happy art of arraying what in other hands would appear cold and comfortless abstractions, in the warmest colours of fancy. Without the least affectation of frivolous ornaments, without quitting his argument in pursuit of imagery, his imagination becomes the perfect handmaid of his reason, ready at every moment to spread her canvass, and present her pencil. But what pleases us most, and affords us the highest satisfaction, is to find such talents enlisted on the side of true Christianity; nor can we help indulging a benevolent triumph at the accession of powers to the cause of evangelical piety, which its most distinguished opponents would be proud to possess.

REVIEW

OF

CUSTANCE ON THE CONSTITUTION.

A Concise View of the Constitution of England. By GEORGE CUSTANCE. *Dedicated, by permission, to William Wilberforce, Esq., M.P. for the County of York.* 12mo. pp. 474. Price 6*s.* bds. Kidderminster: Gower. London: Longman and Co.; Hatchard. 1808.

IT were surely to be wished that every man had a competent acquaintance with the laws and constitution of the country to which he belongs. Patriotism is a blind and irrational impulse, unless it is founded on a knowledge of the blessings we are called to secure, and the privileges we propose to defend. In a tyrannical state it is natural for the ruling power to cherish political ignorance, which can alone reconcile men to the tame surrender of their natural rights. The diffusion of light and knowledge is very unfavourable to ill-founded pretensions of every sort, but to none more than the encroachments of arbitrary power and lawless violence. The more we explore the recesses of a dungeon, the less likely are we to be reconciled to take up our residence in it. But the venerable fabric of the British constitution, our hereditary mansion, whether it be tried by the criterion of convenience or of beauty, of ancient prescription or of practical utility, will bear the most rigid examination; and the more it is contemplated will be the more admired.

The Romans were so conscious of the importance of imparting to the rising generation an early knowledge of their laws and constitution, that the contents of the twelve tables were committed to memory, and formed one of the first elements of public instruction. They were sensible that what lays hold of the mind at so early a period is not only likely to be long remembered, but is almost sure to command vene-

ration and respect. We are not aware that similar attempts have been made to render the British youth acquainted with the principles of our admirable constitution, not inferior surely to that of the Roman republic; a defect in the system of education which the circumstances of the present crisis loudly call upon us to supply. When our existence as an independent nation is threatened, when unexampled sacrifices must be made, and, perhaps, the utmost efforts of patience and of persevering courage exerted for our preservation, an attachment to that constitution which is the basis of all our prosperity, cannot be too zealously promoted or too deeply felt. It is a just and enlightened estimate of the invaluable blessings that constitution secures, which alone can make us sustain our present burdens without repining, as well as prepare us for greater privations and severer struggles. For this reason we cannot but look upon the performance before us as a most seasonable publication. One cause of the attention of youth being so little directed to our national laws and constitution, in schools, is probably the want of suitable books. We have an abundance of learned and able writers on these subjects; but few, if any, that are quite adapted to the purpose we are now speaking of. Millar's is a very profound and original work; but it supposes a great deal of previous knowledge, without which it can be scarcely understood, and is in every view better adapted to aid the researches of an antiquary, or the speculations of a philosopher, than to answer the end of an elementary treatise. De Lolme's performance may be deemed more suitable; yet, able and ingenious as it is, it labours under some essential deficiencies, considered in the light of an elementary work. There is in it a spirit of refined speculation, an eagerness to detect and display latent, unthought-of excellences, in the frame of government, which is very remote from the simplicity requisite in the lessons of youth. Of Blackstone's Commentaries it would be presumptuous in us to attempt an eulogium, after Sir William Jones has pronounced it to be the *most beautiful outline* that was ever given of any science. Nothing can exceed the luminous arrangement, the vast comprehension, and, we may venture to add from the best authorities, the legal accuracy of this wonderful performance, which, in style and composition, is distinguished by an unaffected grace, a majestic simplicity, which

can only be eclipsed by the splendour of its higher qualities. Admirable, however, as these commentaries are, it is obvious that they are much too voluminous and elaborate to answer the purpose of an introduction to the study of the English constitution. We do, therefore, most sincerely congratulate the public on the appearance of a work which we can safely recommend as well fitted to supply a chasm in our system of public instruction. The book before us is, in every view, well adapted for the instruction of youth: the clear and accurate information it conveys upon a most important subject, and the truly Christian tincture of its maxims and principles, are well calculated to enlarge the understanding and improve the heart. We beg leave particularly to recommend it to the attention of schools, in which, we conceive, a general acquaintance with the laws and constitution of the country might be cultivated with much advantage, as forming a proper preparation for the active scenes of life. Legal provisions for the security of the best temporal interests of mankind are the result of so much collective wisdom and experience, and are so continually conversant with human affairs, that we know no study more adapted to invigorate the understanding, and at the same time to give a practical turn to its speculations. The close cohesion of its parts tends to make the mind severely argumentative, while its continual relation to the state of society and its successive revolutions fences it in on the side of metaphysical abstraction and useless theories. What we look upon (for the reasons already mentioned) to be a most useful and interesting study at all times, we would earnestly recommend as an indispensable duty at the present crisis.

Of the merits of the work before us, the public may form some judgment, when we inform them that it contains whatever is most interesting to the general reader in Blackstone, together with much useful information derived from Professor Christian, De Lolme, and various other eminent authors. Some will be ready to accuse the writer of having carried his partiality toward whatever is established too far; nor dare we say the charge is entirely unfounded. We are not disposed, however, to be severe upon him on this account. We wish to see the minds of our youth preoccupied with a strong bias in favour of our national institutions. We would wish to see them animated by a warm and generous enthusiasm, and to

defer the business of detecting faults and exposing imperfections to a future period. Let us only be allowed to remark, that this policy should be temperately employed; lest the mind should suffer a revulsion, and pass, perhaps rather abruptly, from implicit admiration to the contrary extreme lest, indignant at having been misled, it substitute general censure for undistinguishing applause.

We wish our author had, in common with Blackstone, expressed his disapprobation of the severity of our criminal code. The multiplicity of capital punishments we shall always consider as a reproach to the English nation; though, numerous as they are, they bear no proportion to what they would be were the law permitted to take its course. The offences deemed capital by the common law are few; the sanguinary complexion of the criminal law, as it now stands, has arisen from the injudicious tampering of the legislature. To us it appears evident, that the *certainty* of punishment will restrain offenders more than its severity; and that, when men are tempted to transgress, they do not weigh the emolument they had in view against the penalty awarded by law, but simply the probability of detection and punishment against that of impunity. Let the punishments be moderate, and this will be the most effectual means of rendering them certain. While nothing can exceed the trial by jury, and the dignified impartiality with which justice is administered, we are compelled to look upon the criminal code with very different emotions, and earnestly to wish it were carefully revised, and made more humane, simple, and precise.

As little can we concur with the author before us in the defence he sets up of the donation of pensions and sinecures, where there are no pretensions of personal merit or honourable services. Standing quite aloof from party politics, we must affirm, that to whatever extent such a practice exists, exactly in the same proportion is it a source of public calamity and disgrace. To look at it, as our author does, only in a pecuniary view, is to neglect the principal consideration. It is not merely or chiefly as a waste of public money that the granting of sinecures and pensions to the undeserving ought to be condemned; the venality and corruption it indicates and produces is its worst feature, and an infallible symptom of a declining state. With these exceptions, we have accom-

panied the author with almost uninterrupted pleasure, and have been highly gratified with the good sense, the extensive information, and the unaffected piety he displays throughout the work. Though a firm and steady churchman himself, he manifests a truly Christian spirit toward the Protestant dissenters; and is so far from looking with an evil eye on the large toleration they enjoy, that he contemplates with evident satisfaction the laws on which that toleration is founded.

Of the style of this work, it is but justice to say that, without aspiring to any high degree of ornament, it is pure, perspicuous, and correct, well suited to the subject on which it is employed.

As a fair specimen of Mr. C.'s manner of thinking, we beg leave to lay before our readers the following just and appropriate remarks on *duelling*:—

"Deliberate duelling falls under the head of *express malice;* "and the law of England has justly fixed the crime and punish- "ment of murder upon both the principal and accessaries of "this most unchristian practice. Nothing more is necessary "with us, to check this daring violation of all law, than the "same firmness and integrity in the trial of duellists which "so eminently distinguish an English jury on all other "occasions.

"Perhaps it will be asked, what are *men of honour* to do, "if they must not appeal to the pistol and sword? The "answer is obvious: if one *gentleman* has offended another, "he cannot give a more indisputable proof of genuine courage, "than by making a frank acknowledgment of his fault, and "asking forgiveness of the injured party. On the other hand, "if he have received an affront, he ought freely to forgive, as "he hopes to be forgiven of God. And if either of the parties "aggravate the matter by sending a challenge to fight, the "other must not be a partaker of sin, if he would obey God "rather than man.

"Still it will be said that a *military* or *naval* man, at least, "must not decline a challenge, if he would maintain the cha- "racter of a man of courage. But is it not insulting the "loyalty and good sense of the brave defenders of our laws, "to imagine that they of all men must violate them to pre- "serve their honour; since the king has expressly forbidden

"any military man to send a challenge to fight a duel, upon "pain of being cashiered, if an officer; and of suffering cor- "poral punishment, if a non-commissioned officer or private "soldier? Nor ought any officer or soldier to upbraid another "for refusing a challenge, whom his Majesty positively de- "clares *he* considers as having only acted in obedience to his "royal orders; and fully acquits of any disgrace that may be "attached to his conduct.* Besides, what necessary con- "nexion is there between the fool-hardiness of one who risks "the eternal perdition of his neighbour and of himself in an "unlawful combat, and the patriotic bravery of him who, "when *duty* calls, boldly engages the enemy of his king and "country? None will dispute the courage of the excellent "Colonel Gardiner, who was slain at the battle of Preston "Pans, in the rebellion of 1745. Yet he once refused a "challenge, with this dignified remark: 'I fear sinning, "though I do not fear fighting.'† The fact is, that fighting "a duel is so far from being a proof of a man's possessing "*true* courage, that it is an infallible mark of his *cowardice.* "For he is influenced by 'the fear of man,' whose praise he "loveth more than the praise of God."

* "See 'Articles of War,' sec. 7."

† "See Doddridge's 'Life of Colonel Gardiner,' an interesting piece of biography, worthy the perusal of every officer in the army and navy."

REVIEW

OF

ZEAL WITHOUT INNOVATION.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION,

It was the opinion of some sincere friends of religion, that a republication of the following strictures might have its use in certain quarters, where the literary journal in which they first appeared may possibly not have extended. The writer of these remarks has nothing in view but the promotion of Christian charity, the vindication of calumniated innocence, and the counteraction of those insidious arts by which designing men are seeking to advance their personal interest, or those of a party, at the expense of truth and justice. How far the author here animadverted upon falls under this description, must be left to the decision of an impartial public. If it be thought that more commendation ought to have been given in the following strictures to those parts of the work which are confessedly unexceptionable, the writer must be allowed to remark, that the effect of what is good in the performance is entirely defeated by the large infusion of what is of an opposite quality. In appreciating the merits of a writer, the general tendency of his work should be principally regarded, without suffering the edge of censure to be abated by such a mixture of truth as only serves to give a safer and wider circulation to misrepresentation and falsehood.

It has been deemed a capital omission in the following critique, that no notice is taken of the author's illiberal treatment of the Puritans. This omission arose partly from a wish to avoid prolixity, and partly from an apprehension it would lead to a discussion not perfectly relevant to the matter in hand. It would be no difficult matter to construct such a defence of the Puritans as would leave this or any other author very little to reply; but to do justice to the subject would require a deduction of facts, and a series of arguments,

quite inconsistent with the limits to which we are confined. To oppose assertion to assertion, and invective to invective, could answer no end but the reviving animosities which we should be happy to see for ever extinguished. The controversy betwixt the Puritans and their opponents turns entirely on these two questions:—Has any religious society, assuming the name of a church, a right to establish new terms of communion, distinct from those enjoined by Christ and his apostles? Admitting they have such a right, ought these terms to consist in things which the imposers acknowledge to be indifferent, and the party on whom they are enjoined look upon as sinful? Is not this a palpable violation of the apostolical injunction, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations?" We are persuaded we speak the sentiments of some of the best men in the Church of England, when we assert that the basis of communion was made narrower at the Reformation than is consistent with the dictates of Christian charity or sound policy, and that the Puritans were treated with a severity altogether unjustifiable. The author of Zeal without Innovation declares himself "dissatisfied with the trite remark that there were faults on "both sides, when the guilt of aggression rests so clearly on "the heads of the nonconformists." To infer their guilt as aggressors, because they were the first to complain, is begging the question at issue. Before we are entitled to criminate them on this head, it is requisite to inquire into the *justice* of their complaints. They who first discover a truth are naturally the first to impugn the opposite error. They who find themselves aggrieved are necessarily the first to complain. So that to attach culpability to the party which betrays the first symptoms of dissatisfaction, without farther inquiry, is to confer on speculative error, and on practical tyranny, a claim to unalterable perpetuity—a doctrine well suited to the mean and slavish maxims inculcated by this writer. The learned Warburton was as little satisfied as himself with the trite remark of there being faults on both sides, but for an opposite reason. "It would be hard," he affirms, "to say who "are most to blame; those who oppose established authority "for things indifferent; or that authority which rigidly insists "on them, and will abate nothing for the sake of tender, mis-"informed consciences: I say it would be hard to solve this,

" had not the apostle done it for us, where he says, ' We that " are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and *not* " *to please ourselves.*' ' I myself,' says he, ' do so, and all for " the Gospel's sake.' This is the man who tells us he had " fought a good fight and overcome. And we may believe " him ; for in this contention, he is always the conqueror who " submits."

When the question is fairly put, whether a tender conscience, admitting it to be erroneous, shall be forced, or the imposition of things confessedly indifferent be dropped, it can surely require but little sagacity to return a decisive answer. The arguments which induced Locke to give his suffrage in favour of the nonconformists, the reasons which prevailed on Baxter and on Howe to quit stations of usefulness in the church, and doom themselves to an unprofitable inactivity, will not easily be deemed light or frivolous. The English nation has produced no men more exempt from the suspicion of weakness or caprice than these.

Desirous of composing, rather than inflaming, the dissensions which unhappily subsist among Christians, we decline entering farther on this topic, heartily praying, with the apostle, that "grace may be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

REVIEW.

Zeal without Innovation; or, the Present State of Religion and Morals considered, with a View to the Dispositions and Measures required for its Improvement. To which is subjoined, an Address to young Clergymen, intended to guard them against some prevalent Errors. 1808.

THERE are some works which require to be viewed only in a literary light. No important principles are discussed, nor any momentous interests at stake. When this is the case, nothing more is necessary than for a reviewer to exhibit the author's plan, and to give an impartial judgment on the ability with which it is executed. If the merit of the performance be very conspicuous, it is the less necessary to multiply words in order to show it; and if it have little or none, it need not be conducted to the land of forgetfulness with the pomp of criticism. For this reason, the utility of periodical criticism may, in a literary view, be fairly questioned; as it seems like an attempt to anticipate the decision of the public, and prematurely to adjust those pretensions which, if left to itself, it will be sure to adjust, in time, with the most perfect impartiality. A reviewer may give a momentary popularity to what deserves to be forgotten, but he can neither withhold nor bestow a lasting fame. Cowper, we will venture to say, is not the less admired because the Critical Review, with its usual good taste and discernment, could discover in him no traces of poetic genius.

There are other works, which owe their importance more to the subjects on which they treat, and their tendency to inflame the prejudices, and strike in with the humour, of the public, than to any extraordinary ability. Their infection renders them formidable. They are calculated to increase the violence of an epidemic disease. The matter of contagion ought not to be slighted on account of the meanness of the vehicle by which it is transmitted. We are sorry to be under the necessity of classing the performance before us with works of that nature; but our conviction of its deserving that

character must be our apology for bestowing a degree of attention upon it to which it is not otherwise entitled. The author's professed design is to present a view of the state of religion and morals, and to suggest such remedies as are best adapted to correct the disorder under which they languish. A more noble and important undertaking cannot be conceived. We have only to lament that, in the pursuit of it, he betrays so many mean partialities and ungenerous prejudices as utterly disqualify him from doing justice to the subject. While we would wish to give him credit for *some* portion of good intention, we are firmly convinced, that had *his eye been single, his whole body had been* more *full of light.* In an attempt to trace the causes of degeneracy in religion and morals, and to point out the proper correctives, nothing is more requisite than a large and Catholic spirit, totally emancipated from the shackles of party, joined with extensive knowledge and a discriminating judgment. In the first of these qualities the author is lamentably deficient. He looks at every thing so entirely through the medium of party, that, though he cannot be said to be absolutely blind, he is quite incapable of seeing afar off. His remarks are often shrewd; such as indicate a mind awake and attentive to the scenes which have passed before him. He is sometimes acute, never comprehensive; accurate in details, with little capacity for tracing the consequences and unfolding the energy of general principles. While the title of the work leads us to expect his attention would be entirely directed to the best means of promoting the moral improvement of mankind, the watchful reader will perceive there are *subordinate objects* which he is at least equally solicitous to advance. There is a complication in his views, *a wheel within a wheel*, quite incompatible with simplicity of mind and perfect purity of intention. There appears too much reason to regard him as an artful, bigoted partisan, acting under the disguise of a philanthropist and a reformer. Severe as this censure may seem, we are persuaded our readers will acknowledge its justice, when they are apprised of the leading statements and positions contained in this singular work.

The author sets out with descanting on the state of religion in this country, which he represents as very deplorable: in proof of this, he adduces, among other facts, the violation of

the Christian sabbath, and the prevailing neglect of public worship. As these symptoms of degeneracy are not found in an equal degree among dissenters and methodists, he is led, by the course of his subject, to notice the state of religion amongst them, where he acknowledges there is no room to complain of a deficiency of zeal. He does not affect to deny that their teachers exhibit the great truths of Christianity with energy and effect, and that much good has resulted from their labours. We should naturally suppose a pious man would here find ground for satisfaction, and that, however he might regret the mixture of error with useful efforts, he would rejoice to perceive that real and important good was done anywhere. It is but justice to him to let him convey his feelings on this subject in his own words.

"From the sad state of things represented in the pre-
"ceding section many turn with pleasure to what is passing
"among our separatists, whose places of worship generally
"exhibit a very different scene to our parish churches.
"Here there appears to be some life and effect. The offi-
"ciating minister has not half-empty pews to harangue, but
"a crowded auditory 'hanging on his lips.' Whether,
"however, in what is now before us, we shall find no cause
"of uneasiness, when all its circumstances are considered,
"admits of great doubt.

"It cannot be denied, that, with all the fanaticism charged
"on separatists (and it is to be feared with great truth in
"some instances), many a profligate has been reclaimed, and
"much good in other ways has been done among the lower
"orders, by the labours of their ministers. From these cir-
"cumstances, and the known ignorance and dissoluteness of
"the times, many, without the least degree of adverse inten-
"tion to our established church, have, in the simplicity of
"their hearts, concurred in forwarding the endeavours of the
"separatists. And hence it is, that, in all the more populous
"parts of the country, we see that multitude of dissenting
"chapels, which of late years has increased, and is still
"increasing.

"To some good men, free from all prejudice against the
"Church of England, it is matter of no regret that the
"number of separatists increases, provided there be, with
"this circumstance, an increasing regard to Christianity.

" With such persons, all consideration of forms, and modes " of worship, is sunk in the greater importance of genuine " faith and piety. But it enters not in the thoughts of such " persons, that ' tares may spring up with the wheat,' and that " what at present has a good effect, may operate to the pro- " duction of something hereafter of a very different nature. " Now such we conceive to be the nature of the case before " us. We have reason to apprehend ill consequences from " increasing separatism, with whatever zeal for important " truths, and with whatever success in propagating them, it " be at present accompanied.

" And first, it may be observed that it goes to the annihil- " ation of the established church as a national institution. " The bulk of every newly-raised congregation of separatists " is composed of persons educated within the pale of the " Church of England. Of these many are heads of families, " or likely to become so. By commencing dissenters, they, " and their posterity, however multiplied, are broken off " from the national church. These detachments from the " establishment, going on as they have done of late years, " must, consequently, increase the number of those who " prefer a differently constituted church ; and these may in " time amount to such a majority, as to render it again a " question with those in power, whether the Church of " England shall any longer have the support of the State."— Pp. 14-17.

That the increase of dissenters, *in itself considered*, cannot be a pleasing circumstance to a conscientious churchman, is certain ; and if this is all the author means to say, he talks very idly. The true question evidently is, whether the good accruing from the labours of dissenters is a proper subject of congratulation, *although* it may be attended with this incidental consequence, an increased separation from the established church. In a word, is the promotion of genuine Christianity, or the advancement of an external communion, the object primarily to be pursued? Whatever excellence may be ascribed to our national establishment by its warmest admirers, still it is a human institution—an institution to which the first ages of the church were strangers, to which Christianity was in no degree indebted for its original success, and the merit of which must be brought to the test of utility.

It is in the order of means. As an expedient devised by the wisdom of our ancestors for promoting true religion, it is entitled to support just as far as it accomplishes its end. This end, however, is found, in some instances, to be accomplished by means which are of a different description. A fire, which threatens immediate destruction, is happily extinguished before it has had time to extend its ravages; but it is extinguished by persons who have volunteered their services, without waiting for the engineers, who act under the direction of the police. Here is *zeal*, but, unfortunately, accompanied with *innovation*, at which our author is greatly chagrined. How closely has he copied the example of St. Paul, who rejoiced that Christ was preached, though from envy and contention! With him, the promulgation of divine truth was an object so much at heart, that he was glad to see it accomplished, even from the most criminal motives, and by the most unworthy instruments. With our author, the dissemination of the same truth, by some of the best of men, and from the purest motives, is matter of lamentation and regret. It requires little attention to perceive he has been taught in a different school from the apostle, and studied under a different master.

The eternal interests of mankind are either mere chimæras, or they are matters of infinite importance; compared with which the success of any party, the increase of any external communion whatever, is mere dust in the balance; and for this plain reason, that the promotion of these interests is the very end of Christianity itself. However divided good men may have been with respect to the propriety of legislative interference in the affairs of religion, the arguments by which they have supported their respective opinions have been uniformly drawn from the supposed tendency of such interference, or the contrary, to advance the moral improvement of mankind; and, supposing this to be ascertained, the superior merit of the system to which that tendency belongs was considered as decided. Viewed in this light, the problem is extensive, affording scope for much investigation; while the authority of religion remains unimpaired, and the disputants on each side are left at liberty to indulge the most enlarged sentiments of candour towards each other. Such were the principles on which Hooker and the ablest of his

successors rested their defence of the established church. The high church party, of which Mr. Daubeny may be looked upon as the present leader, have taken different grounds. Their system is neither more nor less than popery, faintly disguised, and adapted to the meridian of England. The writer before us, without avowing the sentiments of Daubeny, displays nearly the same intolerance and bigotry,—under this peculiar disadvantage, that his views want the cohesion of system, his bigotry the support of principle. This formal separation of the interests of the church from those of true religion must inevitably produce the most deplorable consequences. Will the serious and conscientious part of the public be led to form a favourable opinion of a religious community, by hearing it avowed by her champions, that men had better be suffered eternally to perish than to find salvation out of her pale? Will they not naturally ask what those *higher ends* can be, in comparison of which the eternal welfare of a large portion of our fellow-creatures is deemed a trifle? Could such a spirit be supposed generally prevalent in the clergy of the established church, it would at once lose all that is sacred in their eyes, and be looked upon as a mere combination to gain possession of power and emolument, under pretence of religion. We are mistaken if much mischief has not already accrued from the indulgence of this spirit. It has envenomed the ill qualities naturally generated by the domination of a party. It has produced serious injury to the church, by imboldening men to appear in her defence who bring nothing into the controversy but overweening pride, ceremonial hypocrisy, and priestly insolence. Haughty, contemptuous airs, a visible disdain of the scruples of tender consciences, and frequently of piety itself, except under one garb and fashion, have been too generally assumed by her champions. These features have given inexpressible disgust to pious and candid minds; hurt, as they well may be, to see a religious community, however numerous or respectable, continually vaunting itself, laying exclusive claims to purity and orthodoxy, and seeming to consider it as a piece of condescension to suffer any other denomination to subsist. They cannot dismiss it from their minds, that humility is a virtue proper to the church as well as to an individual, and that ecclesiastical pride may happen to be as offensive to heaven

as pride of any other kind. In the church of Rome these qualities have been ever conspicuous; but finding nothing of this sort, in an equal degree, in any other protestant communion, and recollecting that "the lofty looks of men shall be "humbled, and the haughtiness of men be made low," one naturally feels some apprehension that they may not pass unpunished, though they are found in the precincts of a cathedral.

Our author derives no satisfaction from the acknowledged success of dissenters in "turning sinners from the error of "their way," from an apprehension that their success may eventually prove injurious to the establishment. He pretends to foresee, from this cause, a continual transfer of hearers from the church to the conventicle. We beg leave to ask the writer, how such a consequence can ensue, but from the superior zeal and piety of sectaries? To suppose, that with only an *equal* share of these qualities, they will be able to make successful inroad on the church, is to abandon the defence of the hierarchy altogether; since this is acknowledging a radical defect in the system, which operates as a dead weight on its exertions, and disqualifies it for maintaining its ground against rivals; that, in short, instead of being the most efficacious mode of exhibiting and impressing revealed truth, it is intrinsically weak and ineffectual. For that system must surely be acknowledged to be so, which is incapable of interesting the people, and which, by rendering public worship less attractive, produces a general preference of a different mode. To suppose this to be the case is to suppose something essentially wrong, which should be immediately examined and corrected. On this supposition the men are acquitted, the system is arraigned. As this, however, is far from being the opinion of the author, the conclusion returns with irresistible force, that a permanent increase of dissenters can *only* arise from their superior piety and zeal. Now, these are really, in our opinion, qualities too valuable to be dispensed with, whatever interest they may obstruct. Regretting, deeply as we may, in common with our author, that they should have formed an alliance so unfortunate, we must still think it better, not only for their possessors, but for the world at large, for them to be found even here than to have no existence at all; and it is upon this point we are at issue with this *conscientious* re-

former. For our parts, we are really so old-fashioned and puritanical, that we had rather behold men awakened and converted among dissenters and methodists, than see them sleep the sleep of death in the arms of an establishment.

But our author, it seems, is filled with pious alarm for the cause of *orthodoxy*, from the increasing separation from the church. "By the sound doctrine its instituted forms ex- "press, it will," he tells us, "as long as it stands, be a wit- "ness to the truth, in periods the most barren of ministerial "qualification; a rallying point to all truly Christian pastors; "and *an accredited voucher for the purity of their instruction.*" —P. 17. How much were the primitive Christians to be pitied, who were unhappily destitute of any such "voucher;" and had nothing to secure the permanence of truth but the promised presence of Christ, the illumination of the Spirit, and the light of the Scriptures—poor substitutes, undoubtedly, for the solid basis of creeds and formularies! We should readily concur with the author in his views of the security derived from the subscription of Articles, if we could forget a few stubborn facts, which we beg leave humbly to recall to his recollection. Is it not a fact, that the nature and extent of the assent and consent signified by subscription have been the subject of a very thorny controversy, in which more ill faith and chicane have been displayed than were ever before known out of the school of the Jesuits; and that the issue of this controversy has been to establish very generally the doctrine of Paley, that none are excluded by it but Quakers, Papists, and Baptists? Is it not a fact, that the press is teeming every week with publications of the most acrimonious description, written by professed churchmen against persons who have incurred this acrimony merely by their attachment to these Articles? Is it not a fact, that the doctrines they exhibit are so scorned and detested in this country, that whoever seriously maintains them is stigmatized with the name of "Methodist?" and that that part of the clergy who preach them are, *for that reason alone*, more insulted and despised by their brethren than even the dissenters themselves? It is with peculiar effrontery that this author insists on subscription to Articles as a sufficient security for the purity of religious instruction, when it is the professed object of his work to recall his contemporaries to that purity. If he means that the

"voucher" he speaks of answers its purpose because *it is* credited, he is plainly laughing at the simplicity of the people: if he means to assert it is *entitled* to credit, we must request him to reflect how he can vindicate himself from the charge of "speaking lies in hypocrisy."

A long course of experience has clearly demonstrated the inefficacy of creeds and confessions to perpetuate religious belief. Of this the only faithful depository is, not that which is "written with ink," but on the "fleshly tables of the "heart." The spirit of error is too subtle and volatile to be held by such chains. Whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history must know, that public creeds and confessions have occasioned more controversies than they have composed; and that when they ceased to be the subject of dispute they have become antiquated and obsolete. A vast majority of the dissenters of the present day hold precisely the same religious tenets which the puritans did two centuries ago, because it is the instruction they have uniformly received from their pastors; and for the same reason the articles of the national church are almost effaced from the minds of its members, because they have long been neglected or denied by the majority of those who occupy its pulpits. We have never heard of the church of Geneva altering its confession, but we know that Voltaire boasted there was not, in his time, a Calvinist in the city; nor have we heard of any proposed amendment in the creed of the Scotch, yet it is certain the doctrines of that creed are preached by a rapidly decreasing minority of the Scottish clergy. From these and similar facts we may conclude, that the doctrines of the church, with or without subscription, are sure to perpetuate themselves where they are faithfully preached; but that the mere circumstance of their being subscribed, will neither secure their being preached nor believed.

"Separatism," says the author, "has no *fixed or perpetual* "*character*: what it is at present, we may, by attentive ob- "servation, be able to pronounce; but no human foresight "can ascertain what it will be hereafter. Though now, in its "numerous chapels, the soundest doctrine should be heard, "we have no security that they will not become the schools "of heresy. Here, if the licentious teacher get a footing, he "moulds the whole system of ministration to his views; not a

" prayer, not a psalm, not a formulary of any kind, but, in " this case, will become the vehicle of error."—Pp. 17, 18.

How far, in creatures so liable to mistake, a fixed and perpetual character is an enviable attribute, we shall not stay to inquire; with what right it is claimed on this occasion, it is not very difficult to determine. The Thirty-nine Articles will unquestionably always remain the same; that is, they will always be the Thirty-nine Articles: but it is not quite so certain that they are universally believed; much less, that they will always continue to be so; and least of all, that, after having ceased to be believed, they will receive the sanction of every successive legislature. For our parts, such is our simplicity, that when we read of a fixed and perpetual character, our attention is always wandering to men, to some mode of thinking or feeling to which such perpetuity belongs; instead of resting in the useful contemplation of pen, ink, and paper. With every disposition, however, to do the author justice, we have some fear for the success of his argument; suspecting the dissenters will be ready to reply, Our pastors cordially embrace the doctrine contained in your Articles; and as this cannot be affirmed of the majority of yours, the question of perpetuity is reduced to this amusing theorem,—In which of two given situations will a doctrine last the longest—where it is believed without being subscribed, or where it is subscribed without being believed?

The equal justice it is our duty to maintain, obliges us to notice another aspersion which the author casts upon dissenters.

" Every addition Separatism makes to its supporters, alters " the proportion existing in this country between the mo- " narchical and the democratic spirit; either of which, pre- " ponderating to a considerable degree, might be productive " of the most serious consequences. For it is certain, that, " as our church-establishment is favourable to monarchy, " so is the constitution of our dissenting congregations to " democracy. The latter principle is cherished in all com- " munities, where the power resides not in one, or a few, but " is shared, in certain proportions, among all the members; " which is the case in most of the religious societies under " consideration. Let it be remembered, then, that if religion " increase in this way, there is that increasing with it which " is not religion; there is something springing up which is of

" a different nature, and which will be sure to stand, whether " that better thing with which it may grow do or do not."—P. 20.

In this statement the author has exhibited his usual inattention to facts. That the people had, in the first ages, a large share in ecclesiastical proceedings, and that their officers were chosen by themselves, is incontrovertibly evident, as well from Scripture as from the authentic monuments of antiquity. The epistles of St. Cyprian, to go no farther, are as full in proof of this point as if they had been written on purpose to establish it. The transfer of power, first from the people to their ministers, and afterwards from them to the Bishop of Rome, was a gradual work, not fully accomplished till many centuries had elapsed from the Christian era. Until the conversion of Constantine, the Christian church was an *imperium in imperio*, a spiritual republic, subsisting in the midst of the Roman empire, on which it was completely independent; and its most momentous affairs were directed by popular suffrage. Nor did it in this state either excite the jealousy or endanger the repose of the civil magistrate; since the distinction betwixt the concerns of this world and those of another, so ably illustrated by Locke, taught the Christians of that time to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Instructed to yield obedience to princes for conscience' sake, they were not the less orderly or submissive because they declined their interference in the suppression of error, or the punishment of ecclesiastical delinquency. If there be that inseparable connexion between political disaffection and the exercise of popular rights in religion which this writer contends, the primitive Christians must have been in a deplorable state; since it would have been impossible for them to quiet the just apprehensions of government without placing a heathen emperor at the head of the church. What must we think of the knowledge of a writer who was ignorant of these facts; of the candour which suppressed them; or of the humanity which finds an occasion of aspersing his fellow-Christians in what escaped the malignity of heathen persecutors!

The dissenters will not fail to remind the writer that the British is a mixed, not an absolute monarchy; that the habit of considering the people as nothing is as repugnant to its

spirit as that of making them everything; and that to vest the whole power in the hands of one person, without check or control, is more suited to the genius of the Turkish than of the British government. And to this retort, it must be confessed, the conduct of the high-church party, who have seldom scrupled to promulgate maxims utterly subversive of liberty, would lend a very colourable support. The whole topic, however, is invidious, absurd, and merely calculated to mislead; since the constitution of the Christian church is fixed by the will of its Founder, the dictates of which we are not at liberty to accommodate or bend to the views of human policy. The dispute respecting ecclesiastical government must, like every other on religion, be determined, if it ever be determined at all, by an appeal to Scripture, illustrated, perhaps, occasionally by the approved usages of the earliest antiquity. To connect political consequences with it, and to make it the instrument of exciting popular odium, is the indication of a bad cause and of a worse heart. After the specimens our readers have already had of the author's spirit, they will not be surprised to find that he is not quite satisfied with the Toleration Act, which he complains has been perverted from its purpose of affording relief to tender consciences to that of *making* dissenters. We are not acute enough to comprehend this distinction. We have always supposed that it was the intention of the legislature, by that act, to enable protestant dissenters to worship where they pleased, after giving proper notice to the magistrate: how their availing themselves of this liberty can be construed into an abuse of the act, we are at a loss to conceive. This writer would tolerate dissenters, but not allow them to propagate their sentiments; that is, he would permit them the liberty of thinking, which none can restrain, but not of speaking and acting, which are alone subject to the operation of law.

It is quite of a piece with the narrow prejudices of such a man, to complain of it as an intolerable hardship, that a minister of the establishment is sometimes in danger, through the undistinguishing spirit of hospitality, of being invited to sit down with religionists of different descriptions; and he avows his manly resolution of going without his dinner rather than expose himself to such an indignity. It is certainly a most lamentable thing to reflect, that a regular clergyman

may possibly lose *caste* by mixing at the hospitable board with some of those who will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. When Burke was informed that Mr. Godwin held gratitude to be a crime, he replied, "I will take care "not to be accessory to his committing that crime." We hope the lovers of hospitality will take the hint, and never insult the author of 'Zeal without Innovation by exposing him to the touch of the ceremonially unclean.

Although we have already trespassed on the patience of our readers, we cannot dismiss this part of the subject without craving their indulgence a little longer. We are much concerned to witness the spirit of intolerance that pervades many recent publications. If the uniform course of experience can prove anything, it is, that the extension of any particular frame of church government will of itself contribute little to the interests of vital Christianity. Suppose every inhabitant of the kingdom were to return to the bosom of the establishment to-morrow; what real accession would be gained to the kingdom of Christ? Is there any magic in the change of a name, which can convert careless, profane, irreligious dissenters into devout and pious churchmen? The virtuous part of them do honour to the Christian profession in the situation they occupy at present; and for the vicious, they could only infect and disgrace the community with which they proposed to associate. What means this incessant struggle to raise one party on the ruins of another; this assumption of infallibility, and the clamorous demand for the interposition of the legislature, which we so often witness? If the writers to whom we allude will honestly tell us they are apprehensive of their "craft" being in danger, we will give them credit for sincerity; but to attempt to cover their bigotry under a mask of piety, is too gross a deception. Were the measures adopted for which these men are so violent, they would scarcely prove more injurious to religion than to the interests of the established church, to which the accession of numbers would be no compensation for the loss of that activity and spirit which are kept alive by the neighbourhood of rival sects. She would suffer rapid encroachments from infidelity; and the indolence and secularity too incident to opulent establishments would hasten her downfal. Amidst the increasing degeneracy of the clergy, which must

be the inevitable effect of destroying the necessity of vigilance and exertion, the people that now crowd the conventicle would not repair to the church: they would be scattered and dissipated, like water no longer confined within its banks. In a very short time, we have not the smallest doubt, the attendance at church would be much less than it is now. A religion which, by leaving no choice, can produce no attachment,—a religion invested with the stern rigour of law, and associated in the public mind, and in public practice, with prisons and pillories and gibbets,—would be a noble match, to be sure, for the subtle spirit of impiety, and the enormous and increasing corruption of the times. It is amusing to reflect what ample elbow-room the worthy rector would possess; how freely he might expatiate in his wide domain; and how much the effect of his denunciations against schism would be heightened by echoing through so large a void.

> "Hic vasto rex Æolus antro
> Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
> Imperio premit."

The Gallican church, no doubt, looked upon it as a signal triumph when she prevailed on Louis the Fourteenth to repeal the Edict of Nantes, and to suppress the protestant religion. But what was the consequence? Where shall we look, after this period, for her Fenelons and her Pascals—where for the distinguished monuments of piety and learning which were the glory of her better days? As for piety, she perceived she had no occasion for it, when there was no lustre of Christian holiness surrounding her; nor for learning, when she had no longer any opponents to confute, or any controversies to maintain. She felt herself at liberty to become as ignorant, as secular, as irreligious as she pleased; and, amidst the silence and darkness she had created around her, she drew the curtains and retired to rest. The accession of numbers she gained by suppressing her opponents, was like the small extension of length a body acquires by death: the feeble remains of life were extinguished, and she lay a putrid corpse, a public nuisance, filling the air with pestilential exhalations. Such, there is every reason to believe, would be the effect of similar measures in England. That union among Christians, which it is so desirable to recover, must,

we are persuaded, be the result of something more heavenly and divine than legal restraints or angry controversies. Unless an angel were to descend for that purpose, the spirit of division is a disease which will never be healed by troubling the waters. We must expect the cure from the increasing prevalence of religion, and from a copious communication of the Spirit, to produce that event. A more extensive diffusion of piety among all sects and parties will be the best and only preparation for a cordial union. Christians will then be disposed to appreciate their differences more equitably; to turn their chief attention to points on which they agree; and, in consequence of loving each other more, to make every concession consistent with a good conscience. Instead of wishing to vanquish others, every one will be desirous of being vanquished by the truth. An awful fear of God, and an exclusive desire of discovering his mind, will hold a torch before them in their inquiries, which will strangely illuminate the path in which they are to tread. In the room of being repelled by mutual antipathy, they will be insensibly drawn nearer to each other by the ties of mutual attachment. A larger measure of the spirit of Christ would prevent them from converting every incidental variation into an impassable boundary; or from condemning the most innocent and laudable usages for fear of symbolizing with another class of Christians—an odious spirit with which the writer under consideration is strongly impregnated. The general prevalence of piety in different communities would inspire that mutual respect, that heartfelt homage for the virtues conspicuous in the character of their respective members, which would urge us to ask with astonishment and regret, Why cannot we be one? What is it that obstructs our union? Instead of maintaining the barrier which separates us from each other, and employing ourselves in fortifying the frontiers of hostile communities, we should be anxiously devising the means of narrowing the grounds of dispute, by drawing the attention of all parties to those fundamental and Catholic principles in which all concur.

To this we may add, that a more perfect subjection to the authority of the great Head of the church would restrain men from inventing new terms of communion, from lording it over conscience, or from exacting a scrupulous compliance

with things which the word of God has left indifferent. That sense of imperfection we ought ever to cherish would incline us to be looking up for superior light, and make us think it not improbable that, in the long night which has befallen us, we have all more or less mistaken our way, and have much to learn and much to correct. The very idea of identifying a particular party with the church would be exploded; the foolish clamour about schism hushed; and no one, however mean and inconsiderable, be expected to surrender his conscience to the claims of ecclesiastical dominion. The New Testament is surely not so obscure a book that, were its contents to fall into the hands of a hundred serious, impartial men, it would produce such opposite conclusions as must necessarily issue in their forming two or more separate communions. It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief points about which real Christians are divided, are points on which that volume is silent—mere human fabrications, which the presumption of men has attached to the Christian system. A larger communication of the Spirit of truth would insensibly lead Christians into a similar train of thinking; and being more under the guidance of that infallible Teacher, they would gradually tend to the same point, and settle in the same conclusions. Without such an influence as this, the coalescing into one communion would probably be productive of much mischief: it certainly would do no sort of good, since it would be the mere result of intolerance and pride, acting upon indolence and fear.

During the present disjointed state of things, then, nothing remains but for every one to whom the care of any part of the church of Christ is intrusted, to exert himself to the utmost in the promotion of vital religion, in cementing the friendship of the good, and repressing, with a firm and steady hand, the heats and eruptions of party spirit. He will find sufficient employment for his time and his talents in inculcating the great truths of the Gospel, and endeavouring to "form Christ" in his hearers, without blowing the flames of contention, or widening that breach which is already the disgrace and calamity of the Christian name. Were our efforts uniformly to take this direction, there would be an *identity* in the impression made by religious instruction; the distortion of party features would gradually disappear; and Chris-

tians would everywhere approach towards that ideal beauty spoken of by painters, which is combined of the finest lines and traits conspicuous in individual forms. Since they have all drunk into the same spirit, it is manifest nothing is wanting but a larger portion of that spirit to lay the foundation of a solid, cordial union. It is to the immoderate attachment to secular interest, the love of power, and the want of reverence for truth, not to the obscurities of revelation, we must impute the unhappy contentions among Christians—maladies which nothing can correct but deep and genuine piety. The true *schismatic* is not so properly the person who declines a compliance with what he judges to be wrong, though he may be mistaken in that judgment, as the man who, like the author before us, sedulously employs every artifice to alienate the affections of good men from each other.

Having animadverted on the illiberality of this writer towards persons of different persuasions, we now proceed to notice his misrepresentations of the state of religion, together with his treatment of that description of the clergy with whom he has been accustomed to associate.

The cause of religion he represents as in a very declining state.

"Some persons now living," he says, "can remember the "time when absence from church was far from being so "common as it is now become. Then, the more considerable "heads of families were generally seen in the house of God, "with their servants as well as children. This visible ac- "knowledgment of the importance of religion had a good "effect on families of inferior condition: the presence of the "merchant and his household brought the tradesman and his "family; and the example of the latter induced his journey- "men and out-door servants to come to church. But this is "not a description of modern habits. In many pews, once "regularly filled by the entire household to which they be- "longed, it is now common to see only a portion of the "family, and often not an individual. Two or three of the "younger branches, from the female side of the house, occa- "sionally attend, with, perhaps, the mother, but without the "father and the sons: the father, wearied with business, wants "a little relaxation; and to the young men, not suspecting "their want of instruction, a rural excursion offers something

" interesting, while the tranquil service of a church is too " tame an occupation for their unexhausted spirits. Nor " among the few who attend public worship are they always " the same individuals that we see in the house of God. So " that it does not appear to be from steady principle, and still " less from the influence of parental authority, that some of " the family are occasionally there. The children are left to " themselves; they may go to church if they choose to do so; " they incur no displeasure from the father, they excite no " grief in his bosom, if they stay away. There is no disre- " putation attaching to absence. It falls rather upon the " contrary conduct; any uniform attendance on divine wor- " ship being frequently considered a mark of imbecility or " demureness.

" To account for the thinness of our parochial congrega- " tions, some allege that there is not a sufficient quantity of " naturally attractive circumstances in the ordinary service " of the church. But it is observable that where our liturgy " is used in its *grandest* form, the attendance is as far " from being numerous as it is elsewhere. It might be ex- " pected, and especially in an age in which a taste for *music* " so generally prevails, that in a metropolis containing near " a million of inhabitants, there might be more persons " drawn by the grandeur of cathedral worship to the place " where it is performed, than could well be accommodated " in one church. The cathedral of London, however, presents " no such scene. With a numerous attendance of ministers, the " finest specimens of church-music, and these performed with " that effect which professional qualification gives to such " compositions, the seats of St. Paul's cathedral are seldom " half filled."—Pp. 2-4.

Though we acknowledge the truth of his statement in a great measure, we are far from drawing from it the inference he wishes to impress. Whenever places of worship are thinly attended, at least in the established church, we have uniformly found it to proceed from a cause very distinct from the general decay of piety; it results from the absence of that sort of instruction which naturally engages the attention and fixes the heart. In one view, we are fully aware a great alteration has taken place: an attachment to the mere forms of religion has much subsided; the superstitious reverence formerly paid

to consecrated places and a pompous ceremonial has waxed old; so that nothing will now command a full attendance at places set apart for divine worship but the preaching of the Gospel, or of something, at least, that may be mistaken for it. Instead of concurring with the author in considering this as evincing the low state of Christianity amongst us, we are disposed to look upon it in a contrary light, being fully convinced that a readiness to acquiesce in the mere forms and ceremonies of religion, to the neglect of that truth which sanctifies the church, is one of the most dangerous errors to which men can be exposed. There is something in the constitution of human nature so abhorrent from the absence of all religion, that we are inclined to believe more are ruined by embracing some counterfeit instead of the true, than by the rejection of true and false altogether. We are not sorry, therefore, to learn, that the music at St. Paul's is not found a sufficient substitute for "the joyful sound," nor a numerous show of ministers accepted by the people, in the room of "Christ crucified set forth before them." Let the truths which concern men's eternal salvation be faithfully taught in that noble edifice, and the complaint of slender attendance will soon cease. In the mean time, of that part of the citizens who might be expected to frequent the cathedral, some are too gay and fashionable not to prefer the music of the theatre and the opera; and some are serious Christians, whose hunger for the bread of life will not be satisfied or diverted by the symphonies of an organ, or the splendour of canonical dresses.

He who is resolved to see nothing but what grows in his own inclosure, may report that "all is barren," though the fields around him bloom like the garden of Eden; and such is the strength of this writer's prejudices, that it is morally impossible for him to give a just representation of facts. In forming his estimate of the state of religion, he is resolved to look only where he knows nothing is to be seen: and absurdly complains of the want of a crop where he is conscious the soil has never been cultivated. Effects must be looked for from their natural causes: men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles; nor are the fruits of Christianity to be expected in the absence of the Gospel. Notwithstanding this writer's gloomy prognostications, we have no doubt of the kingdom of Christ making sensible advances; and, in support

of this opinion, we adduce the wider extension of religious truth, the multitude of places where the Gospel is preached in its purity, the general disposition to attend it, the establishment of Sunday-schools, the circulation, with happy effect, of innumerable tracts, the translation of the Scriptures into foreign languages, and their more extensive communication to all nations, the formation of missionary societies, the growing unanimity among Christians, and the prodigious increase of faithful ministers in the established church. We presume these facts may be allowed a degree of weight, sufficient to overbalance the thin attendance at St. Paul's. It is not a little surprising that a writer, who professes to exhibit a correct idea of the religious state of the nation, should pay no attention to these circumstances, or content himself with alluding to them in terms expressive of chagrin and vexation. Regarding the extensive institutions, and the diffusive benefits, which the efforts of serious Christians in different connexions have produced, as a contraband article, not entitled to be mentioned in the estimate of our moral worth, he represents us as generally sunk in spiritual sloth and poverty. We should not learn from this writer that attempts were making for the universal propagation of Christianity; that translations of the Scriptures were going on in different languages; or that a zeal for the conversion of pagans had occasioned a powerful reaction at home, by producing efforts, hitherto unexampled, toward carrying the Gospel into the darkest corners of the kingdom. We should never suspect, from reading his work, that any material alteration had taken place within the last fifty years, or that new life had been infused into the professing world beyond what we might conjecture, perhaps, from certain indirect references and dark insinuations. Without noticing these facts, he calls upon us to join in pathetic lamentations over the prostrate state of religion, upon no better ground than the neglect of places of worship where the Gospel is *not* preached, and where there is little to attract attention beside the privilege of hearing *fine music* and seeing *fine ministers* for nothing. It is a consolation to us to be convinced that the state of things is much otherwise than he represents; that more persons are brought acquainted with the glad tidings of the Gospel, and more minds penetrated with the concerns of eternity, than at any period since the Reformation.

Thus far we dispute the justice of this author's statement

and are disposed to question the truth of the inference he has drawn from some insulated facts. But this is not the only fault we have to find with this part of his work. He has not only, in our opinion, been betrayed into erroneous conclusions, but has utterly failed in catching the distinguishing features in the aspect of the times; so that his picture bears no sort of resemblance to the original. He has painted nothing; he has only given an account of a particular distortion or two; so that a foreigner would no more be able, by reading his work, to form an idea of the state of religion in England, than of a countenance he had never seen, by being told its chin was too long, or its nostrils were too wide. It must be evident to every one, that the most striking characteristic of the present times is the violent, the outrageous opposition that is made to religion by multitudes, and the general disposition in the members of the community to take a decided part. To this circumstance the writer has never adverted. It is impossible to suppose it could escape his attention: we must therefore impute his silence to the well-weighed dictates of prudence, which admonished him of the possibility of betraying himself into inconveniences by such a discussion: nor need we be surprised, notwithstanding his boasted magnanimity, at his yielding to these suggestions; since his magnanimity is of that sort which makes a man very ready to insult his brethren, but very careful not to disgust his superiors. As we are happily exempt from these scruples, we shall endeavour, in as few words as possible, to put the reader in possession of our ideas on this subject.

The leading truths of revelation were all along retained in the church of Rome, but buried under such a mass of absurd opinions and superstitious observances, that they drew but little attention, and exerted a very inconsiderable influence in the practical application of the system. At the Reformation, they were effectually extricated and disengaged from errors with which they had been mingled, were presented in a blaze of light, and formed the basis of our national creed. As it was by pushing them to their legitimate consequences that the Reformers were enabled to achieve the conquest of popery, they were a while retained in their purity, and every deviation from them denounced as menacing a revolt to the enemy. The Articles of the Church were a real transcript of the

principles the Reformers were most solicitous to inculcate; and, being supported by the mighty impulse which produced the Reformation, while that remained fresh and unbroken they constituted the real faith of the people. Afterwards they underwent an eclipse in the protestant church of England, as they had done in the church of Rome, though from causes somewhat different. The low Arminianism and intolerant bigotry of Laud paved the way for a change, which was not a little aided and advanced by the unbounded licentiousness and profligacy which overspread the kingdom after the Restoration: for it must be remembered that there is an intimate connexion between the perception and relish of truth and a right disposition of mind; that they have a reciprocal influence on each other; and that the mystery of faith can only be placed with safety in a pure conscience. When lewdness, profaneness, and indecency, reigned without control, and were practised without a blush, nothing, we may be certain, could be more repugnant to the prevailing taste, than the unadulterated word of God. There arose also, at that time, a set of divines who, partly in compliance with the popular humour, partly to keep at a distance from the puritans, and partly to gain the infidels, who then began to make their appearance, introduced a new sort of preaching, in which the doctrines of the Reformation, as they are usually styled, were supplanted by copious and elaborate disquisitions on points of morality. Their fame and ability emboldened their successors to improve upon their pattern, by consigning the Articles of the church to a still more perfect oblivion, by losing sight still more entirely of the peculiarities of the Gospel, guarding more anxiously against every sentiment or expression that could agitate or alarm, and by shortening the length, and adding as much as possible to the dryness, of their moral lucubrations. From that time, the idea commonly entertained in England of a perfect sermon, was that of a discourse upon some moral topic, clear, correct, and argumentative, in the delivery of which the preacher must be free from all suspicion of being moved himself, or of intending to produce emotion in his hearers; or, in a word, as remote as possible from such a mode of reasoning on righteousness, temperance, and judgment, as should make a Felix tremble. This idea was very successfully realized, this singular model of pulpit eloquence

carried to the utmost perfection; so that, while the bar, the parliament, and the theatre, frequently agitated and inflamed their respective auditories, the church was the only place where the most feverish sensibility was sure of being laid to rest. This inimitable apathy in the mode of imparting religious instruction, combined with the utter neglect of whatever is most touching or alarming in the discoveries of the Gospel, produced their natural effect of extinguishing devotion in the established church, and of leaving it to be possessed by the dissenters; of whom it was considered as the distinguishing badge, and from that circumstance derived an additional degree of unpopularity. From these causes the people gradually became utterly alienated from the Articles of the church, eternal concerns dropped out of the mind, and what remained of religion was confined to an attention to a few forms and ceremonies. If any exception can be made to the justice of these observations, it respects the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, which were often defended with ability, though in a dry and scholastic manner, and the discussion of which served to mark the return of the principal festivals of the church; while other points not less important, —such as the corruption of human nature, the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith,—were either abandoned to oblivion, or held up to ridicule and contempt. The consequence was, that the creed established by law had no sort of influence in forming the sentiments of the people; the pulpit completely vanquished the desk; piety and puritanism were confounded in one common reproach; an almost pagan darkness in the concerns of salvation prevailed; and the English became the most irreligious people upon earth.

Such was the situation of things when Whitfield and Wesley made their appearance; who, whatever failings the severest criticism can discover in their character, will be hailed by posterity as the second Reformers of England. Nothing was farther from the views of these excellent men, than to innovate in the established religion of their country; their sole aim was to recall the people to the good old way, and to imprint the doctrine of the Articles and Homilies on the spirits of men. But this doctrine had been confined so long to a dead letter, and so completely obliterated from the mind by contrary instruction, that the attempt to revive it

met with all the opposition which innovation is sure to encounter, in addition to what naturally results from the nature of the doctrine itself, which has to contend with the whole force of human corruption. The revival of the old appeared like the introduction of a new religion; and the hostility it excited was less sanguinary, but scarcely less virulent, than that which signalised the first publication of Christianity. The Gospel of Christ, or that system of truth which was laid as the foundation of the Reformation, has since made rapid advances; and, in every step of its progress, has sustained the most furious assault. Great Britain exhibits the singular spectacle of two parties contending, not whether Christianity shall be received or rejected, but whether it shall be allowed to retain any thing spiritual: not whether the Articles and Homilies shall be repealed, but whether they shall be laid as the basis of public instruction. Infidelity being too much discredited by the atrocities in France, to hope for public countenance, the enemies of religion, instead of attacking the outworks of Christianity, are obliged to content themselves with vilifying and misrepresenting its distinguishing doctrines. They are willing to retain the Christian religion, providing it continue inefficient; and are wont to boast of their attachment to the established church, when it is manifest there is little in it they admire, except its splendour and its emoluments. The clerical order, we are sorry to say, first set the example; and, since evangelical principles have been more widely diffused, have generally appeared in the foremost ranks of opposition. This is nothing more than might be naturally looked for. With all the respect we feel for the clergy, on account of their learning and talents, it is impossible not to know that many of them are mere men of the world, who have consequently the same objections to the Gospel as others, together with some peculiar to themselves. As the very attempt of reviving doctrines which have been obliterated through their neglect, implies a tacit censure of their measures, so, wherever that attempt succeeds, it diminishes the weight of their ecclesiastical character. Deserted by the people, and eclipsed in the public esteem by many much their inferiors in literary attainments, they feel indignant: and if, as we will suppose, they sometimes suspect their being neglected has arisen from their inattention to im-

portant truths and indispensable duties, this increases their uneasiness, which, if it fails to reform, will inevitably exasperate them still more against those who are the innocent occasions of it. It is but fair to acknowledge, that, in conducting the controversy, they have generally kept within decent bounds, have often reasoned where others have railed, and have usually abstained from topics hackneyed by infidels and scoffers. But they cannot be vindicated from the charge of having, by a formal opposition to the Gospel, inflamed the irreligious prejudices of the age, obstructed the work they were appointed to promote, and imboldened others, who had none of their scruples or restraints, to outrage piety itself. The dragon has cast from his mouth such a flood of heresy and mischief, that Egypt, in the worst of her plagues, was not covered with more loathsome abominations. Creatures, which we did not suspect to have existed, have come forth from their retreats, some soaring into the regions of impiety on vigorous pinions, others crawling on the earth with a slow and sluggish motion, only to be tracked through the filthy slime of their impurities. We have seen writers of every order, from the Polyphemuses of the north to the contemptible dwarfs of the Critical Review; men of every party, infidels, churchmen, and dissenters,—a motley crew, who have not one thing in common, except their antipathy to religion,—join hands and heart on this occasion: a deadly taint of impiety has blended them in one mass; as things the most discordant, while they are *living* substances, will do perfectly well to putrefy together.

We are not at all alarmed at this extensive combination; we doubt not of its producing the most happy effects. It has arisen from the alarm the great enemy has felt at the extension of the Gospel; and, by drawing the attention of the world more powerfully to it, will ultimately aid the cause it is intended to subvert. The public will not long be at a loss to determine where the truth lies, when they see in one party a visible fear of God, a constant appeal to his oracles, a solicitude to promote the salvation of mankind; in the other, an indecent levity, an unbridled insolence, an unblushing falsehood, a hard unfeeling pride, a readiness to adopt any principles and assume any mask that will answer their pur-

pose, together with a manifest aim to render the Scriptures of no authority, and religion of no effect.

Having so often alluded to the "evangelical clergy," we shall close this division of our remarks with exhibiting a slight outline of the doctrines by which the clergy of this class are distinguished. The term *evangelical* was first given them simply on account of their preaching the Gospel, or, in other words, their exhibiting with clearness and precision the peculiar truths of Christianity. In every system there are some principles which serve to identify it, and in which its distinguishing essence consists. In the system of Christianity, the rules of moral duty are not entitled to be considered in this light, partly because they are not peculiar to it, and partly because they are retained by professed infidels, who avow, without scruple, their admiration of the morality of the Gospel. We must look, then, elsewhere, for the distinguishing character of Christianity. It must be sought for in its doctrines, and, as its professed design is to conduct men to eternal happiness, in those doctrines which relate to the way of salvation, or the method of a sinner's reconciliation with God. There are some, we are aware, who would reduce the whole faith of a Christian to a belief of the Messiahship of Christ, without reflecting that, until we have fixed some specific ideas to the term Messiah, the proposition which affirms him to be such contains no information. The most discordant apprehensions are entertained by persons who equally profess that belief; some affirming him to be a mere man, others a being of the angelic order, and a third party that he essentially partakes of the divine nature. The first of these look upon his sufferings as merely exemplary; the last as propitiatory and vicarious. It must be evident, then, from these views being at the utmost distance from each other, that the proposition that Christ is the Messiah conveys little information, while the import of its principal term is left vague and undetermined. The Socinian and Trinitarian, notwithstanding their verbal agreement, having a different object of worship, and a different ground of confidence, must be allowed to be of different religions. It requires but a very cursory perusal of the Articles of the established church, to determine to which of these systems *they* lend *their* support: or to perceive that the Deity of Christ, the doctrine of atonement for

sin, the guilt and apostacy of man, and the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to restore the divine image, are asserted by them in terms the most clear and unequivocal. This question stands quite independent of the Calvinistic controversy. Are the clergy styled evangelical to be blamed for preaching *these* doctrines? Before this can be allowed, the Articles must be cancelled by the same authority by which they were established; or it must be shown how it consists with integrity to gain an introduction to the church by signifying an unfeigned assent and consent to certain articles of religion, with the intention of immediately banishing them from notice. The clamour against the clergy in question cannot, without an utter contempt of decency, be excited by the mere fact of their being known to hold and inculcate these doctrines; but by the manner of their teaching them, or the exclusive attention they are supposed to pay them, to the neglect of other parts of the system. The measure of zeal they display for them, they conceive to be justified, as well by a view of the actual state of human nature, as by the express declaration of the inspired oracles. Conceiving, with the compilers of the Articles, that the state of man is that of a fallen and apostate creature, they justly conclude that a mere code of morals is inadequate to his relief; that, having lost the favour of God by his transgression, he requires not merely to be instructed in the rules of duty, but in the method of regaining the happiness he has forfeited: that the pardon of sin, or some compensation to divine justice for the injury he has done to the majesty of the supreme Lawgiver, are the objects which ought, in the first place, to occupy his attention. An acquaintance with the rules of duty may be sufficient to teach an innocent creature how to secure the felicity he possesses, but can afford no relief to a guilty conscience, nor instruct the sinner how to recover the happiness he has lost. Let it be remembered, that Christianity is essentially a restorative dispensation; it bears a continual respect to a state from which man is fallen, and is a provision for repairing that ruin which the introduction of moral evil has brought upon him. Exposed to the displeasure of God and the curse of his law, he stands in need of a Redeemer; disordered in his powers, and criminally averse to his duty, he equally needs a Sanctifier. As adapted to such a situation, much of the New Testament

is employed in displaying the character and unfolding the offices of both, with a view of engaging him to embrace that scheme of mercy which the divine benignity has thought fit to exhibit in the Gospel. The intention of St. John, in composing the evangelical history, coincides with the entire purpose and scope of revelation: "These things are written," said he, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believ-"ing, ye might have life through his name." Whoever considers that, upon every hypothesis except the Socinian, Christianity is a provision of mercy for an apostate and sinful world, through a divine Mediator, will acknowledge that something more is included in the idea of preaching the Gospel, than the inculcation of moral duties; and that he who confines his attention to these, exchanges the character of a Christian pastor for that of a fashionable declaimer, or a philosophical moralist. If we turn our eyes to the ministry of the apostles, we perceive it to have consisted in "testifying repentance toward "God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:" repentance, which is natural religion modified by the circumstances of a fallen creature, including a return to the path of duty; and faith, which is a practical compliance with the Christian dispensation, by receiving the Saviour as "the way, the truth, "and the life." Faith and repentance being the primary duties enjoined under the Gospel, and the production of these the professed end of the inspired writers, we need not wonder that those who are ambitious to tread in their steps, insist much, in the course of their ministry, on the topics which supply the principal motives to these duties; the evil of sin, the extent of human corruption, together with the dignity, power, and grace of the Redeemer. Remembering that the object of repentance is God, they do not, in treating of sin, satisfy themselves with displaying its mischievous effects in society: they expatiate on its contrariety to the divine nature; they speak of it chiefly as an affront offered to the authority of the Supreme Ruler; and represent no repentance as genuine which springs not from godly sorrow, or a concern for having displeased God. In this part of their office they make use of the moral law, which requires the devotion of the whole heart and unfailing obedience, as the sword of the Spirit, to pierce the conscience and to convince men that "by the deeds of it no "flesh living can be justified, but that every mouth must be

"stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." The uniform course of experience serves to convince them, that, till a deep impression of this truth be made on the heart, the character of the Saviour, and the promise of pardon through his blood, will produce no gratitude, and excite no interest. In inculcating faith in Christ, they cannot satisfy themselves with merely exhibiting the evidences of Christianity; a mere assent to which, upon historical grounds, undeniably fails, in innumerable instances, of producing those effects which are uniformly ascribed to that principle in the New Testament; neither overcoming the world, nor purifying the heart, nor inducing newness of life. They are of opinion that the external evidences of the Christian religion are chiefly of importance, on account of their tendency to fix the attention on Christ, the principal object exhibited in that dispensation; and the faith on which the Scriptures lay so much stress, and connect with such ineffable benefits, they conceive essentially to involve a personal reliance on Christ for salvation, accompanied with a cordial submission to his authority. Attempting to produce this Scriptural faith, in a dependence upon the divine blessing (without which the best means will be unsuccessful), they dwell much on the dignity of his character as the Son of God, the admirable constitution of his person as "Immanuel, God with us," the efficacy of his atonement, and the gracious tenour of his invitations, together with the agency of that Spirit which is entrusted to him as the Mediator, to be imparted to the members of his mystical body. In their view, to preach the Gospel is to preach Christ; they perceive the New Testament to be full of him: and while they imbibe that spirit with which it is replete, they feel a sacred ambition to diffuse "the savour of his name in "every place."

Let it not be inferred from hence, that they are inattentive to the interests of practical religion, or that their ministry is merely occupied in explaining and enforcing a doctrinal system. None lay more stress on the duties of a holy life, or urge with more constancy the necessity of their hearers showing their faith by their works; and they are incessantly affirming, with St. James, that the former without the latter "is dead, being alone." Though, in common with the inspired writers, they ascribe their transition from a state of

death to a state of justification solely to faith in Christ previous to good works actually performed, yet they equally insist upon a performance of those works as the evidence of justifying faith; and, supposing life to be spared, as the indispensable condition of final happiness. The law, not altered in its requirements (for what was once duty they conceive to be duty still), but attempered in its sanctions to the circumstances of a fallen creature, they exhibit as the perpetual standard of rectitude, as the sceptre of majesty by which the Saviour rules his disciples. They conceive it to demand the same things, though not with the same rigour, under the Gospel dispensation as before. The matter of duty they look upon as unalterable, and the only difference to be this; that, whereas, under the covenant of works, the condition of life was sinless obedience, under the new covenant, an obedience sincere and affectionate, though imperfect, is accepted for the sake of the Redeemer. At the same time they do not cease to maintain, that the faith which they hold to be justifying comprehends in it the seminal principle of every virtue; that if genuine, it will not fail to be fruitful; and that a Christian has it in his power to show his faith "*by* "*his works*," and by no other means. Under a full conviction of the fallen state of man, together with his moral incapacity to do what is pleasing to God, they copiously insist on the agency of the Spirit, and affectionately urge their hearers to implore his gracious assistance. From *no class* of men will you hear more solemn warnings against sin, more earnest calls to repentance, or more full and distinct delineations of the duties resulting from every relation in life, accompanied with a peculiar advantage of drawing from the mysteries of the Gospel the strongest motives to strengthen the abhorrence of the one, and enforce the practice of the other. In their hands, morality loses nothing but the pagan air with which it is too often invested. The morality which they enjoin is of heavenly origin, the pure emanation of truth and love, sprinkled with atoning blood, and baptized into an element of Christian sanctity. That they are not indifferent to the interests of virtue is sufficiently apparent, from the warm approbation they uniformly express of the excellent work of Mr. Wilberforce, which is not more conspicuous for the orthodoxy of its tenets than for the purity and energy of its

moral instruction. If we look at the effects produced from the ministry of these men, they are such as might be expected to result from a faithful exhibition of the truth of God. Wherever they labour, careless sinners are awakened, profligate transgressors are reclaimed, the mere form of religion is succeeded by the power, and fruits of genuine piety appear in the holy and exemplary lives of their adherents. A visible reformation in society at large, and, in many instances, unequivocal proofs of solid conversion, attest the purity of their doctrines and the utility of their labours; effects which we challenge their enemies to produce where a different sort of teaching prevails.

The controversy between them and their opponents, to say the truth, turns on a point of the greatest magnitude: the question at issue respects the choice of a supreme end, and whether we will take "the Lord to be our God." Their opponents are for confining religion to an acknowledgment of the being of a God and the truth of the Christian revelation, accompanied with some external rites of devotion, while the world is allowed the exclusive dominion of the heart; *they* are for carrying into effect the apostolic mission by summoning men to repentance, and engaging them to an entire surrender of themselves to the service of God through a Mediator. In the system of human life, their opponents assign to devotion a very narrow and limited agency: *they* contend for its having the supreme control. The former expect nothing from religion but the restraint of outward enormities by the fear of future punishment; in the views of the latter, it is productive of positive excellence, a perennial spring of peace, purity, and joy. Instead of regarding it as a matter of occasional reference, they consider it as a principle of constant operation. While their opponents always overlook, and frequently deny, the specific difference between the church and the world; in *their* views the Christian is a pilgrim and stranger in the earth, one whose heart is in heaven, and who is supremely engaged in the pursuit of eternal realities. Their fiercest opposers, it is true, give to Jesus Christ the title of the Saviour of the world; but it requires very little attention to perceive, that their hope of future happiness is placed on the supposed preponderancy of the virtues over the vices, and the claims which they then conceive to result on

the *justice* of God; while the opposite party consider themselves as mere pensioners on *mercy*, flee for refuge to the cross, and ascribe their hopes of salvation entirely to the grace of the Redeemer.

For our parts, supposing the being and perfections of God once ascertained, we can conceive of no point at which we can be invited to stop, short of that serious piety and habitual devotion which the evangelical clergy enforce. To live without religion, to be devoid of habitual devotion, is natural and necessary in him who disbelieves the existence of its object; but upon what principles he can justify his conduct, who professes to believe in a Deity, without aiming to please him in all things, without placing his happiness in his favour, we are utterly at a loss to comprehend.

We cannot dismiss this part of the subject without remarking the exemplary moderation of the clergy of this class on those intricate points which unhappily divide the Christian church; the questions, we mean, that relate to predestination and free-will, on which, equally remote from Pelagian heresy and antinomian licentiousness, they freely tolerate and indulge a diversity of opinion, embracing Calvinists and Arminians with little distinction, provided the Calvinism of the former be practical and moderate, and the Arminianism of the latter evangelical and devout. The greater part of them lean, we believe, to the doctrine of general redemption, and love to represent the Gospel as bearing a friendly aspect toward the eternal happiness of all to whom it is addressed; but they are much less anxious to establish a polemical accuracy than to "win souls to Christ."

The opposition they encounter from various quarters will not surprise those who reflect that "they are not of the "world," that "the world loves only its own," and naturally feels a dislike to such as testify that its works are evil. The Christianity of the greater part of the community is merely nominal: and it necessarily follows, that wherever the truths of religion are faithfully exhibited and practically exemplified, they will be sure to meet with the same friends and the same enemies as at their first promulgation; they will be still exposed to assault from the prejudices of unrenewed minds, they will be upheld by the same almighty power, and will continue to insinuate themselves into the

hearts of the simple and sincere with the same irresistible force.

We hope our readers will excuse the length to which we have extended our delineation of the principles of the clergy styled "evangelical," reflecting how grossly they have been misrepresented, and that until the subject is placed fairly and fully in view, it is impossible to form an equitable judgment of the treatment they have met with from the writer under consideration.

The first charge he adduces against the evangelical clergy is that of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, according to Mr. Locke, is that state of mind which disposes a person to give a stronger assent to a religious proposition than the evidence will justify. According to the more common and popular notion, it implies a pretence to supernatural communications, on which is founded a belief in certain doctrines, and the performance of certain actions, which the Scriptures have not authorized or revealed—a dangerous delusion, as it tends to disannul the standard of religion, and by the extravagances and follies it produces, to bring piety into disgrace. We hold enthusiasm in as much abhorrence as our author does; but we ask, what is the proportion of the evangelical clergy who are guilty of it? and for *every* individual amongst them to whom it attaches, we will engage to produce *ten* amongst their opponents who are deficient in the essential branches of *morality*. Yet we should esteem it extreme illiberality in a writer to brand the clergy in general with immorality. There may be some few, among the many hundreds whom the author has undertaken to describe, who are real enthusiasts; but where is the candour or justice of mingling this feature in the delineation of the body? We appeal to the religious public, whether they are not, on the contrary, eminently conspicuous for their close adherence "to the law and to the testimony," and for their care to enjoin nothing on their hearers without direct warrant from the Bible? If every one is to be charged with enthusiasm whose piety is of a more fervid complexion than the accuser is disposed to sympathize with, or can readily account for, we must indeed despair of convincing this writer of the futility of his allegation. They have the *zeal*, which, to him who makes what is most prevalent in the church his model, *must* look like *innovation*.

He frequently insinuates that there is a disposition in them to symbolize with the dissenters, though he had allowed, at the very outset of his work, that they most strictly conform to the prescribed ritual, have no scruples against canonical obedience, and are most firmly attached to the ecclesiastical constitution. Speaking of the established church, he says—

"They (the evangelical clergy) approve, they admire the "church in which they serve. They rejoice in being minis- "ters of such a church. Instead of being indifferent to "its continuance, their devoutest wish is that it may stand "firm on its basis. They consider it as the greatest of bless- "ings to their country. They observe, with no little anxiety, "separatism gaining ground upon it. And this not from an "invidious principle, but because hereby an alienation, *in* "*perpetuity*, is produced in many minds, from a constitution "which they consider as best providing for the universal con- "veyance and permanent publication of Christian truth. Its "continuance they likewise consider as the surest pledge of "religious liberty to all who wish for that blessing. And "in this view they pity the short-sightedness of those religious "persons who forward any measures which make against the "stability of the national church. They view them as men "undermining the strongest bulwark of *their own* security "and comfort, and conceive that Protestant sects, of every "name, however they might prefer their own modes of "religion, would devoutly pray for the support and prosperity "of the church of England, as it now stands, '*Sua si bona* "*norint.*' In short, the ecclesiastical establishment of this "country is, in their views, what 'the ark of God' was in "the estimation of the pious Israelite; and 'their hearts "tremble' more for that than for any thing else, the stability "of which may seem to be endangered in these eventful times. "They would consider its fall as one of the heaviest judg- "ments that could befall the nation."—Pp. 128, 129.

Any such approach to the dissenters as is inconsistent with their professional engagements is incompatible with the truth of this testimony. But let us go on to notice another imputation.

"I am constantly," says the author, "ready to admit that "there is a great deal of truth in what is often alleged by "their opponents; namely, that under their preaching there "has arisen an unfavourable opinion of the body of the clergy

" To excite a hatred of what is evil is, undoubtedly, one pur-
" pose of Christian instruction. But while the preacher is
" attempting this, he must take care that he do not call forth
" the malignant passions. This he is almost sure to do, if he
" point out a certain set of men as persons to whom his repre-
" hensions particularly apply. The hearers, too generally
" apt to forget themselves, are drawn still further from the
" consideration of their own faults, when they can find a de-
" fined class of men on whom they can fasten the guilt of any
" alleged error; on them they will discharge their gall, and
" mistake their rancour for *righteousness*."—Pp. 154, 155, *Second Edition.*

Two questions arise on this point: first, how far an unfavourable opinion of the body of the clergy is just; and secondly, what sort of influence the evangelical party have had in producing it. "The clergy as a body," the author complains, " are considered by them and their adherents as men who do " not preach the Gospel." If we understand him, he means to assert that the clergy, as a body, *do* preach the Gospel: for we cannot suspect him of being so ridiculous as to complain of their being considered in their just and true light. Here we have the very singular spectacle of Gospel ministers exclaiming with bitterness against some of their brethren for preaching the doctrines of the new birth, justification by faith, the internal operations of the Spirit, and whatever else characterised the faith of the reformers, which we have the satisfaction of learning, from this most liberal writer, are no parts of the Gospel. Or, if he demur in assenting to such a proposition, it is incumbent on him to explain what are the *doctrines distinct* from those we have mentioned, the inculcation of which has excited the opposition of the clergy. We, in our great simplicity, supposed that the ministers styled evangelical had been opposed for insisting on points intimately related to the Gospel; but we are now taught, from high authority, that the controversy is entirely of another kind, and relates to subjects with respect to which the preachers of the Gospel may indifferently arrange themselves on either side. We are under great obligations to our author for clearing up this perplexing affair, and so satisfactorily showing both parties they were fighting in the dark. Poor George Whitfield! how much to be pitied! who exhausted himself with incredible labours,

and endured a storm of persecution, in communicating religious instruction to people who were already furnished with more than ten thousand preachers of the Gospel! To be serious, however, on a subject which, if there be one in the world, demands seriousness,—it is an incontrovertible fact, that the doctrines of the Reformation are no longer heard in the greater part of the established pulpits, and that there has been a general departure from the truths of the Gospel, which are exhibited in the ministry of a small, though increasing, minority of the clergy. The author *knows* this to be a fact, although he has the meanness to express himself in a manner that would imply his being of a contrary opinion. We wish him all the consolation he can derive from this trait of godly simplicity, as well as from his reflection on the effect which his flattery is likely to produce in awakening the vigilance and improving the character of his newly-discovered race of Gospel ministers. With respect to the degree in which an unfavourable opinion of the clergy is to be ascribed to the representations of the evangelical party, we have to remark, that they possess too much attachment to their order to delight in depreciating it; and that they are under no temptation to attempt it with a view to secure the preference of their hearers; who, supposing them to have derived benefit from their labours, will be sufficiently aware of the difference between light and darkness, between famine and plenty. Were they to insinuate, with this author, that all their clerical brethren are actually engaged in the same cause, and are promoting the same object with themselves, they would at once be charged with a violation of truth, and be considered as insulting the common sense of the public.

The author is extremely offended at Dr. Haweis, on account of the following passage in his History of the Church of Christ:—"Different itinerant societies have been established "in order to send instruction to the poor, in the villages "where the Gospel is not preached. Probably not less than "five hundred places of divine worship have been opened "within the last three years." Dr. Haweis, in making this representation, undoubtedly conceived himself to be stating a simple fact, without suspecting any lover of the Gospel would call it in question. The author's comment upon it is curious enough. "It would be scarcely credible," he says, "were

" not the time and place marked with sufficient precision, " that a clergyman, beneficed in the Church of England, was " describing, in the foregoing passage, something which had " lately been taking place in this country!" It is surely very credible that there are five hundred places in England where the Gospel is not preached; the incredible part of the business, then, consists in a "beneficed clergyman" daring to assert it, who, according to the author, is a sort of personage who is bound never to utter a truth that will offend the delicate ears of the clergy, especially on so trivial an occasion as that of describing the state of religion in England. What a magnanimity of spirit! and how far is this author from the suspicion of being a man-pleaser!

After acknowledging that the ministers he is characterizing have been *unjustly* charged with infringing on canonical regularity, he adds:

"Would it were as easy to defend them *universally** " against those who accuse them of vanity, of courting popu- " larity, of effrontery, of coarseness, of the want of that affec- " tionate spirit which should breathe through all the minis- " trations of a Christian teacher, of their commonly appearing " before a congregation with an objurgatory aspect, as if their " minds were always brooding over some matter of accusation " against their charge, instead of their feeling towards them " as a father does towards his children."—P. 157.

The reader has, in this passage, a tolerable specimen of the " vanity" and " effrontery" of this writer, as well as of that " objurgatory aspect" he has thought fit to assume toward his brethren, not without strong suspicion of assuming it from a desire to " court popularity." It would be a mere waste of words to attempt to reply to such an accusation, which merits attention on no other account than its exhibiting a true picture of his mind.

" As for the matter," he proceeds to observe, " of which " the sermons delivered by some of them are composed, it is " contemptible in the extreme. Though truths of great im- " portance are brought forward, yet, as if those who delivered " them were born to ruin the cause in which they are engaged, " they are presented to the auditory, associated with such

* The word *universally*, marked in Italics, was inserted *after* the first edition.

" meanness, imbecility, or absurdity, as to afford a complete " triumph to those who are adverse to their propagation. " We are disgusted by the violation of all the rules which " the common sense of mankind teaches them to expect the " observance of on the occasion. It is true, indeed, that " something is heard about Christ, about faith and repentance, " about sin and grace; but in vain we look for argument, or " persuasion, or suavity, or reverential demeanour; qualities " which ought never to be absent, where it is of the utmost " importance that the judgment be convinced, and the affec- " tions gained."—P. 158.

Unfair and illiberal in the extreme as this representation is, it contains an important concession,—that the lowest preachers among them have the wisdom to make a right selection of topics, and to bring forward truths of great importance; a circumstance sufficient of itself to give them an infinite superiority over the "apes of Epictetus." * A great diversity of talents must be expected to be found amongst them; but it has not been our lot to hear of any, whose labours a good man would think it right to treat with indiscriminate contempt. As they are called, for the most part, to address the middle and lower classes of society, their language is plain and simple; speaking in the presence of God, their address is solemn; and, as becomes "the ambassadors of Christ," their appeals to the conscience are close and cogent. Few, if any, among them, aspire to the praise of consummate orators—a character which we despair of ever seeing associated, in high perfection, with that of a Christian teacher. The minister of the Gospel is called "to declare the testimony of God," which is always weakened by a profuse employment of the ornaments of secular eloquence. Those exquisite paintings and nice touches of art, in which the sermons of the French preachers excel so much, excite a kind of attention, and produce a species of pleasure, not in perfect accordance with devotional feeling. The imagination is too much excited and employed, not to interfere with the more awful functions of conscience; the hearer is absorbed in admiration; and the exercise which ought to be an instrument of conviction becomes a feast of taste. In the hand of a Massillon, the subject of death itself is blended with

* Horsley.

so many associations of the most delicate kind, and calls up so many sentiments of natural tenderness, as to become a source of theatrical amusement, rather than of religious sensibility. Without being insensible to the charms of eloquence, it is our decided opinion that a sermon of Mr. Gisborne's is more calculated to "convert a sinner from the error of his way" than one of Massillon's. It is a strong objection to a studied attempt at oratory in the pulpit, that it usually induces a neglect of the peculiar doctrines of Christian verity, where the preacher feels himself restrained, and is under the necessity of explaining texts, of obviating objections, and elucidating difficulties, which limits the excursions of imagination, and confines it within narrow bounds. He is, therefore, eager to escape from these fetters; and, instead of "*reasoning out of* "*the Scriptures*," expatiates in the flowery fields of declamation. It would be strange, however, if the evangelical clergy did not excel their contemporaries in the art of preaching, to which they devote so much more of their attention. While others are accustomed to describe it under the very appropriate phrase of "doing duty," it is their business and their delight. They engage in it under many advantages. Possessed of the same education with their brethren, they usually speak to crowded auditories; the truths they deliver command attention; and they are accustomed to ascend the pulpit under an awful sense of the weight and importance of their charge. Under such circumstances, it is next to impossible for them not to become powerful and impressive. Were it not indelicate to mention names, we could easily confirm our observations by numerous living examples. Suffice it to say, that perhaps no denomination of Christians ever produced so many excellent preachers; and that it is entirely owing to them that the ordinance of preaching has not fallen, in the established church, into utter contempt.

With respect to the remarks the author makes on the "hypochondriacal cast of preaching heard among them," of their "holding their hearers by details of conflicts and expe-"riences," and of their "*prosings* on the hidings of God's "face,"* we need not detain our readers. To good men it will be matter of serious regret, to find a writer, from whom

* In the second edition, the author has changed the term "*prosings*" into *discoursings*."

different things were to be expected, treat the concerns of the spiritual warfare in so light and ludicrous a manner; while the irreligious will heartily join in the laugh. It should be remembered that he is performing quarantine, purging himself from the suspicion of *methodism*, and that nothing can answer this purpose so well as a spice of profaneness.

After expressing his contempt of the evangelical clergy as *preachers*, he proceeds to characterise them in the following manner as *writers* :—

"Here," says he, "I can with great truth affirm, that "many included in that description of clergymen now under "consideration are sorely grieved, by much of what comes out "as the produce of authorship on their side. And well they "may be; to see, as is frequently the case, the blessed truths "of the Gospel degraded, by being associated with newspaper "bombast, with impudence, with invective, with dotage, with "drivelling cant, with buffoonery, and scurrility! Who can "read these despicable publications, without thinking con-"temptuously of all who abet them? But let not every one "in whom an occasional coincidence of opinion may be "recognised, be included in this number. For it is a certain "truth, that the writings of avowed infidels are not more "offensive to several of the clergy in question, than are "some of the publications here alluded to. Let them not, "therefore, be judged of by that which they condemn; by "productions which they consider as an abuse of the liberty "of the press, and a disgrace to the cause which their authors "profess to serve."—P. 179.

Whoever remembers that the most learned interpreter of prophecy now living ranks with the evangelical clergy, whoever recalls to his recollection the names of Scott, Robinson, Gisborne, and a multitude of others of the same description, will not easily be induced to form a contemptuous opinion of their literary talents, or to suspect them of being a whit behind the rest of the clergy in mental cultivation or intellectual vigour. In a subsequent edition the author has explained his meaning, by restricting the censure to all who have ranged themselves *on the side* of the clergy under consideration. But as far as the most explicit avowal of the same tenets can indicate anything, have not each of the respectable persons before mentioned ranged themselves on their side? Or if he will

insist upon limiting the phrase to such as have defended them in controversy, what will he say of Overton, whose work, for a luminous statement of facts, an accurate arrangement of multifarious articles, and a close deduction of proofs, would do honour to the first polemic of the age? In affecting a contempt of this most able writer, he has contradicted himself, having, in another part of his work, borne a reluctant testimony to his talents. He closes his animadversions on the clergy usually styled evangelical, with the following important concessions :—

" We are ready to own, though there have been a few " instances to the contrary, that the moral conduct of the " men in question is consistent with their calling; and that " though the faults above detailed are found among them, " yet that, as a body, they are more than free from immorali- " ties."—P. 162.

The men to whom their accuser ascribes an assemblage of virtues so rare and so important, must unquestionably be " the excellent of the earth," and deserve a very different treatment from what they have received at his hands.

Before we put a final period to this article, we must beg the reader's patience to a few remarks on the general tendency of the work under examination.

For the freedom of censure the author has assumed, he cannot plead the privilege of reproof. He has violated every law by which it is regulated. In administering reproof we are not wont to call in a third party, least of all the party to whom the persons reproved are directly opposed. Besides, if reproof is intended to have any effect, it must be accompanied with the indications of a friendly mind; since none ever succeeded in reclaiming the person he did not appear to love. The spirit this writer displays towards the objects of his censure is decidedly hostile; no expressions of esteem, no attempt to conciliate; all is rudeness, asperity, and contempt. He tells us in his preface, " It is difficult to find an apology " for disrespectful language under any circumstances: if it " can be at all excused, it is when he who utters lets us know " from whence it comes; but he who dares to use it, and yet " dares not to put his name to the abuse, gives us reason to " conclude that his cowardice is equal to his insolence." (Pref. p. iv.) In violation of his own canon, he seems to have

assumed a disguise for the very purpose of giving an unbridled indulgence to the insolence he condemns.

If we consider him in the light of a public Censor, he will appear to have equally neglected the proprieties of that character. He who undertakes that office ought, in all reason, to direct his chief attention to vice and impiety; which, as the common foes of human nature, give every one the privilege of attack; but, though his subject naturally led him to it, we find little or nothing of the kind. In his eagerness to expose the aberrations of goodness, the most deadly sins, and the most destructive errors, are scarcely noticed. In surveying the state of morals, the eccentricities of a pious zeal, a hairbreadth deviation from ecclesiastical etiquette, a momentary feeling of tenderness towards dissenters, are the things which excite his indignation; while the secularity, the indolence, the ambition, and dissipation, too prevalent in the church, almost escape his observation. We do not mean to assert that it is always improper to animadvert on the errors and mistakes of good men; we are convinced of the contrary. But, whenever it is attempted, it ought to be accompanied with such expressions of tenderness and esteem, as shall mark our sense of their superiority to persons of an opposite description. In the moral delineations with which the New Testament abounds, when the imperfections of Christians are faithfully reprehended, we are never tempted to lose sight of the infinite disparity betwixt the friends and the enemies of the Gospel. Our reverence for good men is not impaired by contemplating their infirmities: while those who are strangers to vital religion, with whatever amiable qualities they may be invested, appear objects of pity. The impression made by the present performance is just the reverse. The character of the unquestionably good is placed in so invidious a light on the one hand, and the bad qualities of their opponents so artfully disguised and extenuated on the other, that the reader feels himself at a loss which to prefer. Its obvious tendency is to obliterate every distinctive mark and characteristic by which genuine religion is ascertained.

The writer of this work cannot have intended the reformation of the party on which he has animadverted; for, independently of his having, by the rudeness of his attack, forfeited every claim to their esteem, he has so conducted it,

that there is not one in fifty guilty of the faults he has laid to their charge. Instead of being induced to alter their conduct, they can only feel for him those sentiments which unfounded calumny is apt to inspire. The very persons to whom his censures apply will be more likely to feel their resentment rise at the bitterness and rancour which accompanies them, than to profit by his admonitions.

As we are fully convinced that the controversy agitated between the evangelical party and their opponents involves the essential interests of the Gospel, and whatever renders Christianity worth contending for, we cannot but look with jealousy on the person who offers himself as an umpire; especially when we perceive a leaning towards the party which we consider in the wrong. This partiality may be traced almost through every page of the present work. Were we to look only to speculative points, we might be tempted to think otherwise. It is not, however, in the cool, argumentative parts of a work, that the bias of an author is so much to be perceived, as in the declamatory parts, when he gives a freer scope to his feelings. It is in the choice of the epithets applied to the respective parties, in the expression of contemptuous or respectful feeling, in the solicitude apparent to please the one, combined with the carelessness of offending the other, that he betrays the state of his heart. Judged by this criterion, this author must be pronounced an *enemy* to the evangelical party. We hope this unnatural alienation from the servants of Christ will not prove contagious, or it will soon completely overthrow that reformation which the established church has experienced within the last fifty years.

When Samson was brought into the house of Dagon to make sport for the Philistines, it was by the Philistines themselves; had it been done by an Israelite, it would have betrayed a blindness much more deplorable than that of Samson. Great as were the irregularities and disorders which deformed the church at Corinth, and severely as they were reprehended, it is easy to conceive, but impossible to express, the indignation Paul would have felt, had a Christian held up those disorders to the view and the derision of the heathen world. It is well known that the conduct of Luther, of Carlostadt, and of many other reformers, furnished matter of merited censure, and even of plausible invective; but he

who had employed himself in emblazoning and magnifying their faults would have been deemed a foe to the Reformation. Aware that it will be replied to this, the cases are different, and neither the truth of Christianity nor the doctrines of the Reformation are involved in the issue of the present controversy; we answer, without hesitation, that the controversy now on foot *does* involve nearly all that renders it important for Christianity to be true, and most precisely the doctrines of the Reformation, to which the papists are not more inimical (in some points they are less so) than the opponents of the evangelical clergy. It is the old enmity to the Gospel, under a new form; an enmity as deadly and inveterate as that which animated the breast of Porphyry or of Julian.

The impression of character on the public mind is closely connected with that of principles; so that, in the mixed questions more especially which regard religion and morals, it is vain to expect men will condescend to be instructed by those whom they are taught to despise. Let it be generally supposed that the patrons of orthodox piety are weak, ignorant, and enthusiastic, despicable as a body, with the exception of a few individuals; after being inured to such representations from their enemies, let the public be told this by one who was formerly their friend and associate,—and is it possible to conceive a circumstance more calculated to obstruct the efficacy of their principles? Will the prejudices of an irreligious world against the Gospel be mitigated, by being inspired with contempt for its abettors? Will it be won to the love of piety, by being schooled in the scorn and derision of its most serious professors?

We can readily suppose, that, stung with the reproaches cast upon his party, he is weary of bearing the cross: if this be the case, let him at once renounce his principles, and not attempt, by mean concessions, and a temporizing policy, to form an impracticable coalition betwixt the world and the church. We apprehend the ground he has taken is untenable, and that he will be likely to please neither party. By the friends of the Gospel he will be in danger of being shunned as an "accuser of the brethren;" while his new associates regard him with the contempt due to a sycophant.

It must give the enlightened friends of religion concern, to

witness a spirit gaining ground amongst us, which, to speak of it in the most favourable terms, is calculated to sow the seeds of discord. The vivid attention to moral discrimination, the vigilance which seizes on what is deemed reprehensible, is unhappily turned to the supposed failings of good men, much to the satisfaction, no doubt, of an ungodly world. The practice of caricaturing the most illustrious men has grown fashionable amongst us. With grief and indignation we lately witnessed an attempt of this kind on the character of Mr. Whitfield, made, if our information be correct, by the present author; in which every shade of imperfection, which tradition can supply, or ingenuity surmise, is industriously brought forward for the purpose of sinking him in public estimation. Did it accomplish the object intended by it? It certainly did not. While the prejudice entertained against Whitfield, by the enemies of religion, was already too violent to admit of increase, its friends were perfectly astonished at the littleness of soul, and the callousness to every kind feeling, which could delight in mangling such a character. It was his misfortune to mingle freely with different denominations, to preach in unconsecrated places, and convert souls at uncanonical hours:—whether he acted right or wrong in these particulars, it is not our province to inquire. That he approved himself to his own conscience, there is not the least room to doubt. Admitting his conduct, in the instances alluded to, to have been inconsistent with his clerical engagements, let it be temperately censured; but let it not efface from our recollection the patient self-denial, the unextinguishable ardour, the incredible labours, and the unexampled success, of that extraordinary man. The most zealous votaries of the church need be under no apprehension of her being often disgraced by producing such a man as Mr. Whitfield. *Nil admirari* is an excellent maxim, when applied, as Horace intended it, to the goods of fortune: when extended to a character, nothing can be more injurious. A sensibility to the impression of great virtues bordering on enthusiasm, accompanied with a generous oblivion of the little imperfections with which they are joined, is one of the surest prognostics of excellence.

> "Verum, ubi plura nitent—non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
> Aut humana parum cavit natura —"

The modern restorers of the piety of the church of England were eminent for their godly simplicity and fidelity. Sincerely attached, as it became them, to the establishment of which they were ministers, their spirit was too enlarged, too ardent, too disinterested, to suffer them to become the tools of a party, or to confound the interests of Christianity with those of any external communion. From their being looked upon as innovators, as well as from the paucity of their numbers, they were called upon to endure a much severer trial than falls to the lot of their successors. They bore the burden and heat of the day: they laboured, and others have entered into their labours. We feel, with respect to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new modelling the party, who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet have too little firmness to endure the consequences: timid, temporising spirits, who would refine into insipidity, polish into weakness, and under we know not what pretences of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn, from this and other writers of a similar description, to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces; they will become "like other men," feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength. We would adjure them to be on their guard against the machinations of this new sect. We cannot suspect them of the meanness of submitting to be drilled by their enemies, whom they are invited to approach in the attitude of culprits, beseeching them (in our author's phrase) to "inquire whether there may not be some found among "them of unexceptionable character!" We trust they will treat such a suggestion with ineffable contempt.

After the taste our readers have had of this writer's spirit, they will not be surprised at his entire disapprobation of Mr. Overton's work. The discordance of sentiment must be great betwixt him who wishes to betray, and him whose aim is to defend. Mr. Overton, in behalf of his brethren, boldly appeals from their accusers to the public. This writer crouches to those very accusers, approaches them in a sup-

plicating tone, and, as the price of peace, offers the heads of his brethren in a charger. Overton, by a copious detail of facts, and by a series of irrefragable arguments, establishes their innocence: this writer assents to their condemnation, entreating only that execution may be respited till an inquiry is made into the degrees of delinquency. The author of 'The True Churchman Ascertained' clothes himself with the light of truth: the author of 'Zeal without Innovation' hides himself in the thickest gloom of equivocation.

Before we close this article, we must entreat our reader's patience, while we make one observation relating to the permanence of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is possible the dignitaries of the church may be at a loss to decide whether the services of the evangelical class shall be accepted or rejected; but we are persuaded the people will feel no difficulty in determining whether or not to continue their attendance at the places from whence they are banished. Teachers of the opposite description have already lost their hold on the public mind; and they will lose it more and more. Should the secession from the established church become so general, as that its services are no longer the objects of popular suffrage, it will be deprived of its firmest support. For the author of the 'Alliance' acknowledges that the compact betwixt church and state, which he allows to be a virtual rather than a formal one, rests mainly upon the circumstance of the established religion being that of the majority, without which it becomes incapable of rendering those services to the state for the sake of which its privileges and emoluments were conferred. Nothing but an extreme infatuation can accelerate such an event. But if pious and orthodox men be prevented from entering into the church, or compelled to retire from it, the people will retire with them; and the apprehension of the church being in danger, which has so often been the watchword of party, will become, for once, well founded.

REVIEW

OF

GISBORNE'S SERMONS.

Sermons, principally designed to illustrate and to enforce Christian Morality. By the Rev. T. Gisborne, A.M. 8vo., pp. 430. 1809.

We have read these sermons with so much satisfaction that, were it in our power to aid their circulation by any testimony of our approbation, we should be almost at a loss for terms sufficiently strong and emphatic. Though the excellent author is possessed already of a large share of the public esteem, we are persuaded these discourses will make a great accession to his celebrity. Less distinguished by any predominant quality than by an assemblage of the chief excellences in pulpit composition, they turn on subjects not very commonly handled, and discuss them with a copiousness, delicacy, and force, which evince the powers of a master. They are almost entirely upon moral subjects, yet equally remote from the superficiality and dryness with which these subjects are too often treated. The morality of Mr. Gisborne is arrayed in all the majesty of truth and all the beauties of holiness. In perusing these sermons, the reader is continually reminded of real life, and beholds human nature under its most unsophisticated aspect, without ever being tempted to suppose himself in the schools of pagan philosophy. We cannot better explain the professed scope and object of the author, than by copying a few sentences from his preface.

"Of late years it has been loudly asserted that, among "clergymen who have showed themselves very earnest in "doctrinal points, adequate regard has not been evinced to "moral instruction. The charge has perhaps been urged "with the greatest vehemence by persons who have employed "little trouble in examining into its truth. In many cases

" it has been groundless, in many exaggerated. In some in-
" stances there has been reason, I fear, for a degree of com-
" plaint; and in more a colourable pretext for the imputation.
" I believe that some preachers, shocked on beholding ex-
" amples, real or supposed, of congregations starving on mere
" morality, substituted for the bread of life; eager to lay
" broad and deep the foundations of the Gospel, and ulti-
" mately apprehensive lest their own hearers should suspect
" them of reverting towards *legality;* have not given to morals,
" as fruits of faith, the station and the amplitude to which
" they have a Scriptural claim. Anxious lest others should
" mistake, or lest they should themselves be deemed to mis-
" take, the branch for the root; not satisfied with proclaim-
" ing to the branch, as they were bound habitually to proclaim,
" *Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee,* they have
" shrunk from the needful office of tracing the ramifications.
" They have not left morality out of their discourses, but
" they have kept it too much in the back-ground. They
" have noticed it shortly, generally, incidentally; in a manner
" which, while perhaps they were eminent as private patterns of
" moral duties, might not sufficiently guard an unwary hearer
" against a reduced estimate of practical holiness, nor exempt
" themselves from the suspicion of undervaluing moral obe-
" dience."—Pref. pp. vii., viii.

To the truth of these remarks we cordially assent, as they point to a defect in the ministration of some excellent men, which the judicious part of the public have long lamented, and which Mr. Gisborne, in his present work, has taught his contemporaries how to remedy. Extremes naturally lead to each other. The peculiar doctrines of the Gospel had been so long neglected by the most celebrated preachers, and the pernicious consequences of that neglect, in wearing out every trace of genuine religion, had been so deeply felt, that it is not to be wondered at if the first attempts to correct the evil were accompanied with a tendency to the contrary extreme. In many situations, those who attempted to revive doctrines which had long been considered as obsolete, found themselves much in the same circumstances as missionaries, having intelligence to impart before unknown, and exposed to all the contempt and obloquy which assailed the first preachers of Christianity. While they were engaged in such an under-

taking, it is not at all surprising that they confined their attention almost entirely to the doctrines peculiar to the Christian religion, with less care to inculcate and display the moral precepts which it includes in common with other systems, than their intrinsic importance demanded. They were too much occupied in removing the rubbish and laying the foundations, to permit them to carry their superstructure very high. They insisted, in general terms, on the performance of moral duties; urged the necessity of that holiness without which "none shall see the Lord;" and, by a forcible application of truth to the conscience, produced in many instances the most surprising, as well as the most happy effects. But still, in consequence of limiting their ministry too much to the first elements of the Gospel, and dwelling chiefly on topics calculated to alarm the careless and console the faithful, a wrong taste began to prevail amongst their hearers—a disrelish of moral discussions, a propensity to contemplate Christianity under one aspect alone,—that of a system of relief for the guilty, instead of a continual discipline of the heart. Those wished for stimulants and cordials whose situation required alteratives and correctives. Preachers and hearers have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the fear of being reproached as "*legal*" deterred some good men from insisting so much on moral and practical subjects as their own good sense would have dictated. By this means the malady became more inveterate, till the inherent corruption of human nature converted the doctrine of the Gospel, in a greater or less degree, into the leaven of antinomianism. An error, which at first appeared trivial, at length proved serious; and thus it came to pass that the fabric of sacred truth was almost universally reared in such a manner as to deviate sensibly from the primitive model.

When we look at Christianity in the New Testament, we see a set of discoveries, promises, and precepts, adapted to influence the whole character: it presents an object of incessant solicitude, in the pursuit of which new efforts are to be exerted, and new victories accomplished, in a continued course of well-doing, till we reach the heavenly mansions. There is scarce a spring in the human frame and constitution it is not calculated to touch, nor any portion of human agency which is exempted from its control. Its resources are inexhaustible; and the

considerations by which it challenges attention embrace whatever is most awful or alluring in the whole range of possible existence. Instead of being allowed to repose on his past attainments, or to flatter himself with the hope of success without the exercise of diligence and watchfulness, the Christian is commanded to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. In the *actual* exhibition of religion, the solicitude of serious minds has been made to turn too much on a particular crisis, which has been presented in a manner so insulated that nothing in the order of means seemed instrumental to its production. In short, things have been represented in such a manner as was too apt to produce despondency before conversion, and presumption after it.

It must be allowed, the judicious management of practical subjects is more difficult than the discussion of doctrinal points; which may also account, in part, for the prevalence of the evil we are now speaking of. In treating a point of doctrine, the habit of belief almost supersedes the necessity of proof: the mind of the hearer is usually preoccupied in favour of the conclusions to be established; nor is much address or ingenuity necessary to conduct him in a path in which he has long been accustomed to tread. The materials are prepared to the preacher's hands; a set of texts, with their received interpretations, stand ready for his use; the compass of thought which is required is very limited; and this little circle has been beaten so often, that an ordinary understanding moves through it with mechanical facility. To discuss a doctrinal position to the satisfaction of a common audience requires the smallest possible exertion of intellect. The tritest arguments are in fact the best: the most powerful considerations to enforce assent are rendered, by that very quality, the most conspicuous, as the sun announces himself by his superior splendour. In delineating the duties of life the task is very different. To render these topics interesting, it is necessary to look abroad, to contemplate the principles of human nature, and the diversified modes of human feeling and action. The preacher has not to do with a few rigid and unbending propositions: he is to contemplate and portray a real state of things—a state which is continually changing its aspect, while it preserves its essential character, and the particulars of which mock the powers of enumeration. If he

does not think with great originality, he must at least think for himself: he must use his own eyes, though he may report nothing but what has been observed before. As there lies an appeal, on these occasions, to the unbiassed good sense and observation of unlettered minds, the deficiencies of an injudicious instructor are sure to be detected. His principles will fail of interesting for want of exemplification, or his details will be devoid of dignity, and his delineations of human life disgust by their deviation from nature and from truth.

In points of casuistry, difficulties will occur which can only be solved and disentangled by nice discrimination, combined with extensive knowledge. The general precepts, for example, of justice and humanity may be faithfully inculcated, and earnestly insisted on, without affording a ray of useful direction to a doubting conscience. While all men acknowledge the indispensable obligation of these precepts, it is not always easy to discover what is the precise line of action they enforce. In the application of general rules to particular cases of conduct, many relations must be surveyed, opposing claims must be reconciled and adjusted, and the comparative value of different species of virtue established upon just and solid principles.

These difficulties have been evaded, rather than overcome, by the greater part of moralizing preachers; who have contented themselves with retailing extracts from the works of their celebrated predecessors, or with throwing together a few loose and undigested thoughts on a moral duty, without order and arrangement, or the smallest effort to impress its obligation upon the conscience, or to deduce it from its proper sources. To the total want of unction, to the cold, pagan, antichristian cast of these compositions, joined to their extreme superficiality, must be ascribed, in a great measure, the disgust which many serious minds have contracted against the introduction of moral topics into the pulpit. Our readers will not suspect we mean to apply this censure indiscriminately, or that we are insensible to the extraordinary merits of a Barrow or of a Tillotson, who have cultivated Christian morals with so universal an applause of the English public. We admire, as much as it is possible for our readers to admire, the rich invention, the masculine sense, the exuberantly copious, yet precise and energetic diction, which distinguish the first

of these writers, who, by a rare felicity of genius, united in himself the most distinguishing qualities of the mathematician and of the orator. We are astonished at perceiving, in the same person, and in the same composition, the close logic of Aristotle combined with the amplifying powers of Plato. The candour, the good sense, the natural arrangement, the unpremeditated graces of Tillotson, if they excite less admiration, give us almost equal pleasure. It is indeed the peculiar boast of the English nation to have produced a set of divines, who, being equally acquainted with classical antiquity and inspired writ, and capable of joining to the deepest results of unassisted reason the advantages of a superior illumination, have delivered down to posterity a body of moral instruction more pure, copious, and exact, than subsists amongst any other people; and had they appealed more frequently to the peculiar principles of the Gospel, had they infused a more evangelical spirit into their discourses, instead of representing Christianity too much as a mere code of morals, they would have left us nothing to wish or to regret. Their decision of moral questions was for the most part unquestionably just; but they contemplated moral duties too much apart, neglecting to blend them sufficiently with the motives and principles of pure revelation, after the manner of the inspired writers; and supposing them to believe, they forgot to inculcate, the fundamental truth—that "*by the deeds of the law no flesh* "*living shall be justified.*" Those internal dispositions, whence right conduct can alone flow, were too little insisted on; the agency of the Spirit was not sufficiently honoured or acknowledged; and the subordination of the duties of the second to those of the first table not enough kept in view. The virtues they recommended and enforced were too often considered as the native growth of the human heart, instead of being represented as "*fruits of the Spirit.*" Jesus Christ was not laid as the foundation of morality; and a very sparing use was made of the motives to its practice deduced from his promises, his example, and his sacrifice. Add to this, that the labours of these great men were employed almost entirely in illustrating and enforcing the obligation of particular duties, while the doctrine of the cross engaged little of their attention, except so far as it was impugned by the objections of infidels, or mutilated by the sophistry of papists. From the perusal

of their writings the impression naturally results, that a belief of the evidences of revealed religion, joined to a correct deportment in social life, is adequate to all the demands of Christianity. For these reasons, much as we admire, we cannot recommend them in an unqualified manner, nor consider them as safe guides in religion.

By these remarks, we intend no offence to any class of Christians. That the celebrated authors we have mentioned, with others of a similar stamp, have refined the style and improved the taste of the English pulpit while they have poured a copious stream of knowledge on the public mind, we are as ready to acknowledge as their warmest admirers; but we will not disguise our conviction, that, for the just delineation of the "truth as it is in Jesus," we must look to the Baxters, the Howes, and the Ushers of an earlier period. He who wishes to catch the flame of devotion by listening to the words "which are spirit and are life," will have recourse to the writings of the latter, notwithstanding their intricacy of method and prolixity of style.

It is with peculiar satisfaction we call the attention of our readers to a work which unites, in a considerable degree, the excellences of each class of divines alluded to, without their defects. The discourses are on the following subjects:—Our Lord Jesus Christ the Foundation of Morality; on the Evils resulting from false Principles of Morality; on the Changes produced, by the Coming of Christ, in the Situation of Men as to the Divine Law; Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality; on Living after the Flesh or after the Spirit; the Love of God an Inducement to strict Morality; on Brotherly Love; on the Love of Money; on the Sacrifice of Worldly Interest to Duty; on Christian Bounty; on Discontent; on Worldly Anxiety; on Christian Obedience to Civil Rulers; Christian Patriotism illustrated by the Character of Nehemiah; on quiet Diligence in our Proper Concerns; on Partiality; on Suspicion; on doing Evil to produce Good; on the Superiority of Moral Conduct required of Christians. The reader will perceive it was not the author's design to make a systematic arrangement of Christian duties, and that there are many vices and virtues not comprehended within the plan of his present work. In the discussion of the subjects which he has selected, he has evinced much observation of

human life, a deep insight into the true principles of morals, and an intimate acquaintance with the genius of the Christian religion. He has erected his edifice upon a solid basis; in the choice of his materials he has carefully excluded the wood, hay, and stubble, and admitted no ornaments but such as are fitted to grace the temple of God.

The intelligent reader will discover, in these discourses, the advantage resulting from studying morality as a science. It will yield him great satisfaction to find the writer ascending on all occasions to first principles, forming his decision on comprehensive views, separating what is specious from what is solid, and enforcing morality by no motives which are suspicious or equivocal. He will not see vanity or ambition pressed into the service of virtue, or any approach to the adoption of that dangerous policy which proposes to expel one vice by encouraging another. He will meet with no flattering encomiums on the purity and dignity of our nature, none of those appeals to the innate goodness of the human heart, which are either utterly ineffectual, or, if they restrain from open profligacy, diffuse, at the same time, the more subtle poison of pride and self-righteousness. Mr. Gisborne never confounds the functions of morality with the offices of the Saviour, nor ascribes to human virtue, polluted and imperfect at best, any part of those transcendent effects which the New Testament teaches us to impute to the mediation of Christ. He considers the whole compass of moral duties as branches of religion, as prescribed by the will of God, and no farther acceptable to him than as they proceed from religious motives.

The disposition in mankind to seek justification by the works of the law has been so much flattered and encouraged by the light in which moral duties have been usually placed, that Mr. Gisborne has shown his judgment by counteracting this error at the outset. We recommend to the serious attention of our readers, with this view, the fourth sermon, on Justification not attainable by Acts of Morality. We have never seen a publication in which that important argument is set in a more clear and convincing light.

Though Mr. Gisborne for a series of years has distinguished himself as the able opponent of the doctrine of expediency, yet on no occasion has he exerted more ability in this cause

than in his present work. We recommend it to the thinking part of the public to forget for a moment that they are reading a sermon, and conceive themselves attending to the arguments of a sober and enlightened philosopher. To purify the sources of morals, and to detect the principles of a theory, which enables us to err by system and be depraved by rule, is to do good of the highest sort; as he who diminishes the mass of human calamity by striking one from the list of diseases, is a greater benefactor to mankind than the physician who performs the greatest number of cures. It is in this light we look upon the labours of the present author; to whom we are more indebted than to any other individual for discrediting a doctrine, which threatens to annihilate religion, to loosen the foundation of morals, and to debase the character of the nation. We recommend to universal perusal the admirable discourse on the Evils resulting from false Principles of Morality.

The two discourses which propose to illustrate the Character of Nehemiah contain the most valuable instruction, adapted, in particular, to the use of those who occupy the higher ranks, or who possess stations of commanding influence and authority. They evince just and enlarged views of the duties attached to elevated situations, and breathe the purest spirit of Christian benevolence. The Sermon on the Love of Money displays, perhaps, most of the powers of the orator, and demonstrates in how masterly a manner the author is capable, when he pleases, of enforcing "the terrors of the "Lord." It contains some awful passages, in which, by a kind of repeated asseveration of the same truth, and the happy reiteration of the same words, an effect is produced resembling that of repeated claps of thunder. We shall present our readers with the following specimen.

"Fourthly. Meditate on the final condition to which the "lover of money is hastening. The *covetous*, the man who "is under the dominion of the love of money, 'shall not in-"herit the kingdom of God.' In the present life he has a "foretaste of the fruits of his sin. He is restless, anxious, "dissatisfied; at one time harassed by uncertainty as to the "probable result of his projects; at another, soured by the "failure of them; at another, disappointed in the midst of "success, by discerning, too late, that the same exertions em-

"ployed in some other line of advantage would have been "more productive. But suppose him to have been, through "life, as free from the effects of these sources of vexation as "the most favourable picture could represent him, 'he shall "not inherit the kingdom of God.' He may not have been a "miser; but he was a lover of money. He may not have been "an extortioner; but he was a lover of money. He may not "have been fraudulent; but he was a lover of money. 'He "shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' He has had his day "and his object. He has sought, and he may have accumu-"lated, earthly possessions. By their instrumentality he may "have gratified many other appetites and desires. But he "did not seek first the kingdom of God; therefore he shall "not obtain it. He 'loved the world;' therefore he 'shall "perish with the world.' He has wilfully bartered his soul "for money. In vain is he now aghast at his former mad-"ness. In vain does he now detest the idol which he worship-"ped. The gate of salvation is closed against him. He in-"herits the bitterness of unavailing remorse, the horrors of "eternal death."—Pp. 145, 146.

If we were called to specify the discourse in the present volume that appeared to us the most ingenious and original, we should be inclined to point to the eighteenth, on Suspicion.

Having expressed our warm approbation of this performance, justice compels us to notice what appear to us its principal blemishes; which, however, are so overbalanced by the merit of the whole, that we should scarcely deem them worthy of remark, were it not requisite to vindicate our claim to impartiality. Against the sentiments or the arrangement of these discourses we have nothing to object: the former are almost invariably just and important, often striking and original; the latter is natural and easy, preserving the *spirit* of method even where it may seem to neglect the form; equally remote from the looseness of an harangue, and the ostentation of logical exactness. With the style of this work we cannot say that we are quite so much satisfied. Perspicuous, dignified, and correct, it yet wants something more of amenity, variety, and ease. Instead of that flexibility which bends to accommodate itself to the different conceptions which occur, it preserves a sort of uniform stateliness. The art of trans-

position, carried, in our opinion, to excess, together with the preference of learned to plain Saxon words, give it an air of Latinity, which must necessarily render it less intelligible and acceptable to unlettered minds. It is, indeed, but fair to remark, that the discourses appear to have been chiefly designed for the use of the higher classes. But while we allow this apology its just weight, we are still of opinion that the composition might have assumed a more easy and natural air, without losing anything of its force or beauty. Addresses from the pulpit should, in our apprehension, always make some approach to the character of being plain and popular.

Another blemish which strikes us in this work is the frequent use of interrogations, introduced, not only in the warm and impassioned parts, where they are graceful, but in the midst of argumentative discussion. We have been struck with the prevalence of this practice in the more recent works of clergymen, beyond those of any other order of men. With Demosthenes, we know, interrogation was a very favourite figure; but we recollect, at the same time, it was chiefly confined to the more vehement parts of his speeches, in which, like the eruptions of a furnace, he broke out upon and consumed his opponents. In him it was the natural expression of triumphant indignation: after he had subdued and laid them prostrate by the force of his arguments, by his abrupt and terrible interrogations he trampled them in the mire. In calm and dispassionate discussion, the frequent use of questions appears to us unnatural: it discomposes the attention by a sort of starting and irregular motion, and is a violation of dignity, by affecting to be lively where it is sufficient praise to be cogent and convincing. In a word, when, instead of being used to give additional vehemence to a discourse, they are interspersed in a series of arguments, as an expedient for enlivening the attention and varying the style, they have an air of undignified flippancy. We should scarcely have noticed these little circumstances in an inferior work; but we could not satisfy ourselves to let them pass without observation in an author who to merits of a more substantial nature joins so many and such just pretensions to the character of a fine writer.

REVIEW

OF

GREGORY'S LETTERS.

Letters to a Friend on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion. By Olinthus Gregory, LL.D., *of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich.* 1812.

As this is a work of no ordinary merit, and written upon a subject which all must confess to be of the last importance, we shall endeavour, after being indulged with a few preliminary remarks, to give a pretty copious analysis of its contents; not doubting the greater part of our readers will be solicitous to avail themselves of the rich entertainment and instruction which its perusal will unquestionably afford. The first volume is employed in the discussion of a subject which has engaged the powers of the wisest of men through a series of ages; and minds of every size, and of every diversity of acquisition, having contributed their quota towards its elucidation, the accumulation of materials is such, that it has become more necessary, perhaps more difficult, to arrange than to invent. In the conduct of so extensive an argument, the talents of the writer will chiefly appear in giving the due degree of relief and prominence to the different branches of the subject,—in determining what should be placed in a strong and brilliant light, and what should be more slightly sketched, —and disposing the whole in such a manner as shall give it the most impressive effect. If there is little room for the display of invention, other powers are requisite, not less rare or less useful; a nice and discriminating judgment, a true logical taste, and a talent of extensive combination. An ordinary thinker feels himself lost in so wide a field; is incapable of classifying the objects it presents; and wastes his attention on such as are trite and common, instead of directing it to those which are great and interesting. If there are subjects which it is difficult to discuss for want of data to

proceed upon—and, while they allure by their appearance of abstract grandeur, are soon found to lose themselves in fruitless logomachies and unmeaning subtleties, such as the greater part of the discussions on time, space, and necessary existence, —there are others whose difficulty springs from an opposite cause, from the immense variety of distinct topics and considerations involved in their discussion, of which the divine origination of Christianity is a striking specimen; which it has become difficult to treat as it ought to be treated, merely in consequence of the variety and superabundance of its proofs.

On this account, we suspect that this great cause has been not a little injured by the injudicious conduct of a certain class of preachers and writers, who, in just despair of being able to handle a single topic of religion to advantage, for want of having paid a devout attention to the Scriptures, fly like harpies to the evidences of Christianity, on which they are certain of meeting with something prepared to their hands, which they can tear, and soil, and mangle at their pleasure.

Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fœdant.

The famine also, with which their prototypes in Virgil threatened the followers of Æneas, is not more dismal than that which prevails among their hearers and readers. The folly we are adverting to did not escape the observation nor the ridicule of Swift, who remarked in his days, that the practice of mooting, on every occasion, the question of the origin of Christianity was much more likely to unsettle the faith of the simple, than to counteract the progress of infidelity. It is dangerous to familiarize every promiscuous audience to consider religion as a thing which yet remains to be proved, to acquaint them with every sophism and cavil which a perverse and petulant ingenuity has found out, unaccompanied, as is too often the case, with a satisfactory answer; thus leaving the poison to operate, without the antidote, in minds which ought to be strongly imbued with the principles, and awed by the sanctions, of the Gospel. It is degrading to the dignity of a revelation, established through a succession of ages by indubitable proofs, to be adverting every moment to the hypothesis of its being an imposture, and to be inviting every insolent sophist to wrangle with us about the title,

when we should be cultivating the possession. The practice we are now censuring is productive of another inconvenience. The argument of the truth of Christianity being an argument of accumulation, or, in other words, of that nature, that the force of it results less from any separate consideration than from an almost infinite variety of circumstances, conspiring toward one point, and terminating in one conclusion; this concentration of evidence is broken to pieces when an attempt is made to present it in superficial descants; than which nothing can be conceived better calculated to make what is great appear little, and what is ponderous light. The trite observation, that a cause is injured by the adoption of feeble arguments, rests on a basis not often considered, perhaps by those who most readily assent to its truth. We never think of estimating the powers of the imagination on a given subject, by the actual performance of the poet; but if he disappoint us, we immediately ascribe his failure to the poverty of his genius, without accusing his subject or his art. The regions of fiction we naturally conceive to be boundless; but, when an attempt is made to convince us of the truth of a proposition respecting a matter of fact or a branch of morals, we take it for granted, that he who proposes it has made himself perfectly master of his argument; and that, as no consideration has been neglected that would favour his opinion, we shall not err in taking our impression of the cause from the defence of its advocate. If that cause happen to be such as involves the dearest interests of mankind, we need not remark how much injury it is capable of sustaining from this quarter.

Let us not be supposed, by these remarks, to comprehend within our censure the writer who, amidst the multifarious proofs of revelation, selects a single topic, with a view to its more elaborate discussion, provided it be of such a nature that it will support an independent train of thought; such, for example, as Paley has pursued in his Horæ Paulinæ, to which a peculiar value ought to be attached, as a clear addition to the body of Christian evidences. All we mean to assert is, that it is incomparably better to be silent on the evidences of Christianity, than to be perpetually adverting to them in a slight and superficial manner; and that a question so awful and momentous as that relating to the origin of the Christian

religion ought not to be debased into a trivial commonplace. Let it be formally discussed, at proper intervals, by such men, and such only, as are capable of bringing to it the time, talents, and information, requisite to place it in a commanding attitude. That the author of the present performance is possessed of these qualifications to a very great degree, will sufficiently appear from the analysis we propose to give of the work, and the specimens we shall occasionally exhibit of its execution.

It is ushered in by a modest and dignified dedication to Colonel Mudge, lieutenant-governor of that royal military institution, of which the author is so distinguished an ornament. The whole is cast into the form of Letters to a Friend; and the first volume, we are given to understand, formed the subject of an actual correspondence. As much of the epistolary style is preserved as is consistent with the nature of a serious and protracted argument, without ill-judged attempts at refreshing the attention of the reader by strokes of gaiety and humour. The mind of the writer appears to have been too deeply impressed with his theme to admit of such excursions, the absence of which will not, we are persuaded, be felt or regretted.

Before he proceeds to state the direct proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, he shows, in a very striking manner, the absurdities which must of necessity be embraced by those who deny all pretences to revelation; enumerating, in the form of a creed, the various strange and untenable positions which form the subject of sceptical belief. In this part of the work, that disease in the intellectual temperament of infidels is placed in a stronger and juster light than we remember to have seen it, which may not improperly be denominated the credulity of unbelievers. This representation forms the contents of the first letter.

The necessity of revelation is still more indisputably evinced by an appeal to facts, and a survey of the opinions which prevailed among the most enlightened heathens, respecting God, moral duty, and a future state. Under each of these heads, our author has selected, with great judgment, numerous instances of the flagrant and pernicious errors entertained by the most celebrated pagan legislators, poets, and philospohers; sufficient to demonstrate, beyond all contradiction, the inability

of unassisted reason, in its most improved and perfect state, to conduct man to virtue and happiness, and the necessity, thence resulting, of superior aid. Much diligence of research, and much felicity of arrangement, are displayed in the management of this complicated topic, where the reader will find exhibited, in a condensed form, the most material facts adduced in Leland's voluminous work on this subject. All along, the author holds the balance with a firm and steady hand, without betraying a disposition either to depreciate the value of those discoveries and improvements to which reason really attained, or to charge the picture of its aberrations and defects with deeper shades than justly belong to it. The most eminent among the pagans themselves, it ought to be remembered, who, having no other resource, were best acquainted with its weakness and its power, never dreamed of denying the necessity of revelation: this they asserted in the most explicit terms; and on some occasions seem to have expected and anticipated the communication of such a benefit. We make no apology for citing, from the present work, the following remarkable passage out of Plato, tending both to confirm the fact of a revelation being anticipated, and to evince, supposing nothing supernatural in the case, the profound sagacity of that great author. He says, "This just "person (the inspired teacher of whom he had been speaking) "must be poor, and void of all qualifications but those of virtue "alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions "and reproofs; and therefore, that within three or four years "after he began to preach he should be persecuted, imprisoned, "scourged, and at last be put to death."* In whatever light we consider it, this must be allowed to be a most remarkable passage; whether we regard it as merely the conjecture of a highly enlightened mind, or as the fruit of prophetic suggestion: nor are we aware of any absurdity in supposing that the prolific Spirit scattered, on certain occasions, some seeds of truth amidst that mass of corruption and darkness which oppressed the pagan world. The opinion we have ventured to advance is asserted in the most positive terms, in several parts of Justin Martyr's Second Apology. Without pursuing this inquiry farther, we shall content ourselves with remarking, that, as the sufficiency of mere reason, as the guide to

* De Republicâ, lib. ii.

truth, never entered into the conception of pagans, so it could never have been thus adduced at all, but in consequence of confounding its results with the dictates of revelation, which since its publication has never ceased to modify the speculations and aid the inquiries of those who are least disposed to bow to its authority. On all questions of morality and religion, the streams of thought have flowed through channels enriched with a celestial ore, whence they have derived the tincture to which they are indebted for their rarest and most salutary qualities.

Before we dismiss the subject, we would just observe, that the inefficacy of unassisted reason in religious concerns appears undeniably in two points: the doubtful manner in which the wisest pagans were accustomed to express themselves respecting a future state, the existence of which Warburton is confident none of the philosophers believed; and their proud reliance on their own virtue, which was such as left no room for repentance. Of a future state, Socrates, in the near prospect of death, is represented by Plato as expressing a hope, accompanied with the greatest uncertainty; and, with respect to the second point, the lofty confidence in their own virtue, which we have imputed to them, the language of Cicero, in one of his familiar letters, is awfully decisive: "Nec enim dum ero, angor ullâ re, cum *omni caream culpâ;* "et si non ero, sensu omni carebo." "While I exist, I shall "be troubled at nothing, since I have no fault whatever; and "if I shall not exist, I shall be devoid of all feeling."* So true is it that life and immortality were brought to light by the Saviour; and that, until he appeared, the greatest of men were equally unacquainted with their present condition and their future prospects.

The next Letter, which is the fourth in the series, is on mysteries in religion. Aware that, while the prejudice against whatever is mysterious subsists, the saving truths of the Gospel can find no entrance, the author has taken great, and, as far as the force of argument can operate, successful pains to point out the weakness of the foundations on which that prejudice rests. He has shown, by a large induction of particulars, in natural religion, in natural philosophy, and in pure and mixed mathematics, that with respect to each of these sciences, we

* Vol. i. p. 51.

arrive, by infallible steps, at conclusions of which we can form no clear, determinate conceptions; and that the higher parts of mathematics especially, the science which glories in its superior light and demonstration, teem with mysteries as incomprehensible to the full as those which demand our assent in revelation. His skill as a mathematician, for which he has long been distinguished, serves him on this occasion to excellent purpose, by enabling him to illustrate his subject by well-selected examples from his favourite science; and by that means to prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that the mysterious parts of Christianity are exactly analogous to the difficulties inseparable from other branches of knowledge, not excepting those which make the justest pretensions to demonstration. We run no hazard in affirming, that rarely, if ever, have superior philosophical attainments been turned to a better account, or a richer offering brought from the fields of science into the temple of God. Some of his illustrations, being drawn from the sublimer speculations of mathematics, must necessarily be unintelligible to ordinary readers: but many of them are plain and popular; and he has succeeded in making the principle on which he reasons throughout perfectly plain and perspicuous, which is this—that we are able, in a multitude of instances, to ascertain the *relations* of things, while we know little or nothing of the *nature* of the things themselves. If the distinction itself is not entirely new, the force of argument with which it is supported, and the extent to which its illustration is carried, are such as evince much original thinking. We should seriously recommend this part of the work to the perusal of "the barrister,"* if he were capable of understanding it; and to all, without exception, who have been perverted by the shallow and ambiguous sophism, first broached, we believe, by Dr. Foster, that where mystery begins, religion ends; when the fact is, that religion and mystery both begin and end together, a portion of what is inscrutable to our faculties being intimately and inseparately blended with its most vital and operative truths. A religion without its mysteries is a temple without its God.

Having thus marked out the ground, removed the rubbish, and made room for the foundation, our author proceeds with

* An anonymous opposer of evangelical principles, who had then attained some celebrity, but is now quite forgotten.—Ed.

the skill of a master to erect a firm and noble structure, conducting the argument for the truth of Christianity through all its stages, and commencing his labours in this part of his subject with establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred volume. As he manifestly aims at utility, not at display, we are glad to find he has availed himself of the profound and original reasoning of Hartley, which he has fortified all along with ingenious reflections of his own, and crowned by an appeal to the principal testimonies of Christian and pagan antiquity. The Letter devoted to this subject is long, but not more so than the occasion demanded, and is replete with varied and extensive information. To the whole he has annexed a very accurate and particular account of the researches and discoveries of Dr. Buchanan, made during his visit to the Syrian churches in India; nor are we aware that there is a single consideration of moment tending to confirm the genuineness and integrity of the Scriptures in their present state, which, in the course of our author's extended investigation, has escaped his notice. By some he will be blamed for placing the proofs of the authenticity of the sacred records before the argument from prophecy and miracles: but we think he is right in adopting such an arrangement; since the reasoning on this part not only stands independent of the sequel, but greatly abridges his subsequent labour, by enabling him to appeal on every occasion to the testimony of Scripture, not indeed as inspired, but as an authentic document, that point having been previously established; while it is in perfect unison with that solicitude he everywhere evinces to imbue the mind of his readers with a serious and devotional spirit. Here is a book of a singular character, and of high antiquity, from which Christians profess to derive the whole of their information on religion; and it comes down to us under such circumstances, that every thing relating to it is capable of being investigated, apart from the consideration of prophecies and miracles, except its claim to inspiration. Why, then, should not the pretensions of this book be examined at the very outset, as far as they are susceptible of an independent examination; since the proof of its being genuine and authentic will extend its consequences so far into the subsequent matter of discussion, as well as exert a great and salutary influence on the mind of the inquirer?

The next Letter is devoted to the subject of prophecy; in which, after noticing a few of the more remarkable predictions relating to the revolutions of power and empire, he descends to a more particular investigation of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, which he arranges under three heads: such as respect the time and place of his appearance; his character, doctrine, rejection, and final triumph; and the exact correspondence betwixt his contemptuous treatment and sufferings, and the representations of the ancient oracles. Under the last he embraces the opportunity of rescuing the proof from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, from the cavils of the Jews, as well as from the insinuation of certain infidels that the prophecy was written after the event; which he triumphantly refutes by an appeal to a remarkable passage in the books of Origen against Celsus. In confirming the inference from prophecy, we again meet with a judicious application of the author's mathematical skill, by which he demonstrates, from the doctrine of chances, the almost infinite improbability of the occurrence of even a small number of contingent events predicted of any one individual; and the absolute impossibility, consequently, of accounting for the accomplishment of such numerous predictions as were accomplished in the person of the Messiah, without ascribing it to the power and wisdom of the Deity.

From the consideration of prophecy he proceeds to the evidence of miracles, and the credibility of human testimony. He begins with stating, in few and simple terms, but with much precision, the just idea of a miracle, which, he remarks, has oftener been obscured than elucidated by definition; while the sentiments entertained by good men upon the subject have been almost uniformly correct, when they have not been entangled or heated by controversy. This branch of the evidences of revelation is certainly very little indebted to the introduction of subtle refinements. In resting the evidence of the Jewish and Christian revelations on the ground of miracles, the author restricts his proposition to *uncontrolled miracles;* on the propriety of which different judgments will probably be formed by his readers. We believe him to be right: since, admitting the limitation to be unnecessary, it is but an extreme of caution, a leaning to the safe side; for who will deny that it is much easier to prove it to be incon-

sistent with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity to permit an *uncontrolled* miracle to be performed in support of error, than to demonstrate, from a metaphysical consideration of the powers and capacities of spiritual agents of a high order, their incapacity of accomplishing what, to our apprehensions, must appear supernatural? The writer of this, at least, must confess for himself, he could never find any satisfaction in such speculations, not even in those of Farmer, ingenious as they are; which always appeared to him to be like advancing to an object by a circuitous and intricate path, rather than taking the nearest road. But to return to the present performance. After exhibiting the most approved answers to the flimsy sophistry of Hume, intended to evince the incredibility of miracles,—and corroborating them by a copious illustration of the four criteria of miraculous facts, suggested by Leslie in his admirable work entitled A Short Method with the Deists, he reduces the only suppositions which can be formed respecting the miracles recorded in the New Testament, to the four following heads, which we shall give in the words of the author :—

" Either, first, the recorded accounts of those miracles were " absolute fictions, wickedly invented by some who had a wish " to impose upon mankind:

" Or, secondly, Jesus did not work any true miracles; but " the senses of the people were in some way or other deluded, " so that they believed he really did perform miracles, when, " in fact, he did not:

" Or, thirdly, that the spectators were not in any way de- " luded, but knew very well he wrought no miracles; yet " were all (both enemies and friends, the Jews themselves not " excepted, though they daily 'sought occasion against him') " united in a close confederacy to persuade the world he " wrought the most surprising things. So that, while some " actively circulated reports of those amazing occurrences, the " rest kept their counsel, never offering to unmask the fraud, " but managing the matter with so much dexterity and cun- " ning, and such an exact harmony and correspondence, that " the story of Jesus Christ's performing miracles should " become current, should obtain almost universal credit, *and* " *not a single person be able to disprove it:*

" Or, fourthly, that he did actually perform those astonish-

" ing works, and that the accounts given of them by the " Christian writers in the New Testament are authentic and " correct.

" He that does not adopt the last of these conclusions will " find it a matter of very small consequence which of the " other three he chooses; for that the stories cannot be *fic-* " *tions* is evident from the reasonings of Leslie, already ad- " duced; and it will be seen farther, from a moment's con- " sideration, that the denial of the miracles of Jesus Christ, " *in any way,* leads necessarily to the admission of a series of " real miracles of another kind."

He closes this part of his disquisition with an elaborate confutation of the notion too generally admitted by the advocates of revelation, that the evidence of miraculous facts necessarily grows weaker in proportion to the distance of the time at which they were performed; and in no part does the vigour of his understanding appear to more advantage than in his reasonings on this point, where, among many excellent, we meet with the following profound remark:—

" It is only," he observes, " with regard to the facts re- " corded in the Bible, that men ever talk of the daily dimi- " nution of credibility. Who complains of a decay of evidence " in relation to the actions of Alexander, Hannibal, Pompey, " or Cæsar? How many fewer of the events recorded by " Plutarch, or Polybius, or Livy, are believed now (on ac- " count of a diminution of evidence), than were believed by " Mr. Addison, or Lord Clarendon, or Geoffrey Chaucer? " We never hear persons wishing they had lived ages " earlier, that they might have had better proofs that Cyrus " was the conqueror of Babylon, that Darius was beaten in " several battles by Alexander, that Titus destroyed Jeru- " salem, that Hannibal was entirely routed by Scipio, " or Pompey by Julius Cæsar; though we sometimes find " men of ardent and enterprising minds exclaiming, 'O that " I had lived and been present when such splendid events " occurred, how lively an interest should I have taken in such " scenes, how much concern in their termination!' And, " indeed, it is the frequent hearing of such exclamations that " causes men *to confound weight of evidence with warmth or* " *depth of feeling; and to lose sight of the essential difference* " *between real evidence, or the true basis of belief in history,*

"*and the sensible impression or influence which such history*
"*may make upon the mind.*"

We have only to remark, before we dismiss this subject, that whereas the evidence of facts which occurred at a distant period is usually placed under the head of *successive* evidence, this distinction, as applicable to the miracles of the Gospel, must either be rejected altogether, or admitted with a caution against being misled by the ambiguous use of words. The evidence in this case is not to be confounded for a moment with that of a report transmitted through successive ages to the present time, since the record which contains the miraculous facts carries us back to the apostolic age; so that, admitting its antiquity to be what it pretends, of which there is the most satisfactory evidence, the only link in the succession is that which separates the performers or spectators of the miracles from their narrators, who in the case before us, however, are frequently the same persons.

In order to give that conspicuous place which is due to the greatest and most momentous of these miracles, as well as to do justice to the independent train of proofs by which it is supported, Dr. G. has assigned a separate Letter to the Resurrection of Christ, in which he has placed this great fact in the clearest light; and, to remove every shadow of hesitation arising from the minute variations in the account given of it by the evangelists, has taken the pains to digest from their separate narratives a distinct statement of the whole transaction, which, as far as we have had time to examine it, appears very satisfactory.

To this succeeds an ample illustration of the argument for the truth of Christianity, drawn from its early and extensive propagation; where the fact is placed beyond all contradiction, by numerous and decisive testimonies, adduced from the ancient apologists and pagan writers. The dates of the ten successive persecutions are accurately assigned; and the most striking circumstances attending the last, in particular, are distinctly and forcibly exhibited. This forms the subject of the Ninth Letter, which closes with some admirable observations on the intrinsic excellence of the religion of Jesus, tending to show that it corresponds to all the characters, and fulfils all the indications, which a revelation from heaven might be expected to possess.

The remaining Letters which compose this volume are employed in proving the inspiration of the Scriptures, and answering various miscellaneous objections and cavils advanced against the Bible. Although we have already adduced some specimens of the author's style and composition, and shall have occasion to produce more in the course of our strictures on the second volume, yet we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of laying before our readers the following highly beautiful and eloquent passage. Speaking of the analogy betwixt the difficulties offered in the sciences and the mysteries of religion, he observes—

"Philosophers, notwithstanding all these difficulties, re-
"commend the cultivation and diffusion of the sciences,
"because of their tendency to sharpen the intellectual facul-
"ties of man, and meliorate his condition in society. With
"how much greater reason and earnestness, then, should
"Christians recommend the dissemination and adoption of
"'pure and undefiled religion,' considering its direct tend-
"ency to enlarge the understanding, and yet fill it with the
"contemplation of Deity; to purify and harmonize the pas-
"sions, to refine the moral sense, to qualify and strengthen
"for every function in life; to sustain under the pressure of
"affliction, to afford consolation in sickness, and enable us to
"triumph in death?

"What other science can even make a pretension to de-
"throne oppression, to abolish slavery, to exclude war, to
"extirpate fraud, to banish violence, to revive the withered
"blossoms of paradise? Such are the pretensions and bless-
"ings of genuine Christianity; and wherever genuine Chris-
"tianity prevails, they are experienced. Thus it accomplishes
"its promises on earth, where it alone has enemies; it will
"therefore accomplish them in heaven, where its friends
"reign. Here, indeed, its advocate must be reduced to
"silence; for how shall he display the meaning of its *celestial*
"promises! How describe dignity so vast, or picture glory
"so brilliant! How shall language delineate what mind
"cannot imagine! And where is that mind, among puny and
"ephemeral creatures, that can penetrate the thick obscure,
"that can describe the light of perfect knowledge, that can
"feel the glow of perfect love, that can breathe the air of
"perfect happiness!"—Vol. I. pp. 75, 76.

We proceed to notice the most important positions and reasonings contained in the second volume, which the author has devoted to a display of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. We are aware that many will suspect him of a partial and bigoted attachment to his own opinions, in consequence of the anxiety he manifests to communicate and support those views of Christianity, which, in his estimation, form its most striking peculiarity. It is plain our author considers the evidences of Christianity as entirely subservient to its doctrines; and that he is consequently far from supposing, with some modern divines, that he has accomplished his work by proving that Christianity is a true and a genuine revelation from God. He judges it necessary to spend some time and some labour in considering *what it is* that is true, *what it is* that is revealed. Were we not familiar with the fact, we should be not a little surprised at the prevalence of a contrary persuasion; we should probably think it strange that such an anxiety should be evinced to rest the truth of Christianity on the firmest possible basis, along with such a profound indifference to every attempt to investigate its import. Some wonderful charm, it seems, is contained in a bare avowal that Christianity is a revelation from God, apart from any distinct perceptions of its truths, or any solemn advertence to its genuine scope and tendency. Embalmed and preserved, like some Egyptian monarch, in the form of a venerable and antiquated document, it is to be carefully kept, and always approached with respect, but never allowed to take its place among the living, nor supposed to be useful to mankind according to any known law of operation. The most magnificent appellations are applied to it: it is the light of the world, the true riches, the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price. All these, and a thousand other encomiums, are lavished on the Scriptures by men who at the same time feel no scruple in insinuating that this boasted communication from heaven contains no truths beyond the limits of reason, and that what the bulk of Christians in our age have deemed such are the distempered visions of enthusiasm, if they are not, in some instances, to be ascribed to the erroneous conceptions entertained by the apostles of the religion they were appointed to propagate. It is the *possession* of a revelation, not the *use*, which these men are

accustomed to contemplate and to value. As the miser conceives himself rich by the treasure which he never employs, so the persons to whom we allude suppose themselves enlightened by a book from which they profess to derive no information, and saved by a religion which is allowed to engage little or none of their attention. This is one of the most distinguished features in the character of those who with exemplary modesty style themselves *rational* Christians. In this spirit a distinguished prelate of the present age * has published a collection of tracts for the benefit of the junior clergy, in which not a single treatise is admitted which professes to exhibit a view of Christian doctrine; and has introduced it with a preface, ingeniously calculated, under pretence of decrying dogmas, to bring all such inquiries into contempt. It certainly is not difficult to perceive whence this manner of thinking proceeds, nor whither it tends. It proceeds from a rooted aversion to the genuine truths of revelation; and had it not received a timely check, would have terminated in the general prevalence of scepticism. It presents a neutral ground, on which professed Christians and infidels may meet, and proceed to assail with their joint force the substantial truth of our religion. There is nothing in such views of Christianity to appal the infidel; nothing to mortify the pride, nothing to check or control the exorbitancies of that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God." In stripping the religion of Christ of all that is spiritual, they render it weak and inefficacious as an instrument of renovating the mind; and, by fostering its pride and sparing its corruption, prepare it for shaking off the restraints of religion altogether. It gives us, however, unfeigned satisfaction to perceive that the evil we so much deprecate appears to have met with a fatal check; and that the present times are distinguished by two things which we cannot but consider as most favourable prognostics,—an increased attention to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and a growing unanimity with respect to the modes in which those doctrines are entertained. There is less disposition, on the one hand, to receive for Christianity a system of pagan ethics, and on the other to confound points of doubtful speculation with its fundamental doctrines. The religious zeal of the present day is more open and catholic than

* Bishop Watson.

in former times, partaking less of the acrimony of party, and more of the inspiration of truth and charity. The line of demarcation betwixt sound doctrines and heresy is better ascertained than it has ever been before; and the Christian world are equally averse from whatever approaches to Socinian impiety, and from the mooting of interminable questions.

In the statements of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, there are two extremes to be avoided. The one is, that of pusillanimously shrinking from their bold originality, and attempting to recommend them to the acceptance of proud and worldly-minded men by the artifices of palliation and disguise; of which, in our opinion, the Bishop of Lincoln has given an egregious specimen in his late work.* The other extreme is that of stating them in a metaphysical form, mixing doubtful deductions with plain assertions, and thereby incumbering them with needless subtleties and refinements. We should neither be ashamed of the dictates of the Spirit, nor "add to his words, lest we be reproved." They will always appear with the most advantage, and carry the most conviction, when they are exhibited in their native simplicity, without being mixed with heterogeneous matter, or with positions of doubtful authority. In our apprehension, the true way of contemplating the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, is to consider them as *facts* believed on the authority of the Supreme Being; not to be proved by reason, since their truth does not result from any perceptible relations in our ideas, but they owe their existence entirely to the will and counsel of the Almighty Potentate. On this account, we never consider it safe to rest their truth on a philosophical basis, nor imagine it is possible to add to their evidence by an elaborate train of reasoning. Let the fair grammatical import of Scripture language be investigated; and whatever propositions are, by an easy and natural interpretation, deducible from thence, let them be received as the dictates of infinite wisdom, whatever aspect they bear, or whatever difficulties they present. Repugnant to reason they never can be, because they spring from the Author of it; but superior to reason, whose limits they will infinitely surpass, we must expect to find them, since they are a communication of such matters of fact

* Entitled 'A Refutation of Calvinism.'

respecting the spiritual and eternal world as need not have been communicated, if the knowledge of them could have been acquired from any other quarter. The facts with which we have become acquainted in the natural world would appear stupendous, were they communicated merely on the evidence of testimony: they fail to astonish us, chiefly because they have been arrived at step by step, by means of their analogy to some preceding one. We have climbed the eminence by a slow progression, and our prospect has insensibly widened as we advanced, instead of being transported thither instantaneously by a superior power. Revelation conducts us to the truth at once, without previous training, without any intellectual process preceding, without condescending to afford other proof than what results from the veracity and wisdom of the Creator: and when we consider that this truth respects much sublimer relations and concerns than those which subsist in the material world,—that it regards the ways and counsels of God respecting man's eternal destiny,—is it surprising it should embrace what greatly surpasses our previous conjectures, and even transcends our perfect comprehension? To a serious and upright mind, however, its discoveries are no sooner made than they become supremely acceptable: the interposition of the Deity in the great moral drama is seen to be absolutely necessary; since none but infinite wisdom could clear up the intricacies, nor any power short of omnipotence relieve the distress produced. These very truths, which some ridicule as mysteries, and others despise as dogmas, are, to the enlightened, "sweeter than honey or the honeycomb;" apart from which, whatever else is contained in the Bible would be perfectly tasteless and insipid. Though he receives every communication from God with devout and grateful emotions, he feels no hesitation in confessing that it is in these parts of revelation he especially exults and triumphs; it is these which, in his estimation entitle it to the appellation of "*marvellous light.*"

If it is no small gratification to find so perfect a concurrence in these sentiments, on the part of our author; to find them stated and illustrated in so able a manner as they are throughout this work, is a still greater. The first Letter in this volume is devoted to a general view of the Christian doctrines, designed to obviate certain prejudices, and to pre-

pare the mind for that serious inquiry into their nature and import, which cannot fail, under the blessing of God, of conducting it to the most satisfactory conclusions.

Our author never loses sight of the Gospel as a *restorative dispensation;* this is its primary and most essential feature; and the most dangerous and numerous aberrations from it may be traced to the neglect of considering it in this light. It is not a prescription of a rule of life to the innocent, but the annunciation of a stupendous method of relief for the sinner. Overlooking all petty varieties, and subordinate distinctions, it places the whole human race on one level; abases them all in the dust before the Infinite Majesty; and offers, indiscriminately, a provision of sanctification to the polluted, and of pardon to the guilty. These are the glad tidings; this is the jubilee of the whole earth, proclaimed in the songs of angels, celebrated in the praises of the church, alike in her militant and her triumphant state—whether toiling in the vale of mortality, or rejoicing before the throne.

The second Letter in the series which composes this volume is on the Depravity of Human Nature, where the reader will find the evidence of that melancholy but fundamental truth, exhibited with much conciseness, perspicuity, and force. The third is employed in stating the arguments for the atonement of Christ, under the four divisions of typical, prophetical, historical, and declaratory proofs; and the whole is closed by a very luminous and satisfactory answer to the most specious objections against that momentous truth. In adverting to the objection to a vicarious sacrifice, founded on the notion of its being unjust that the innocent should be appointed to suffer in the room of the guilty, we meet with the following admirable passage of Archbishop Tillotson, remarkable for that perfect good sense, simplicity, and perspicuity, which distinguish the writings of that excellent prelate:—

"'If the matter,' says he, 'were searched to the bottom, "all this perverse contention about our Saviour suffering for "our benefit, but not in our stead, will signify just nothing. "For if Christ died for our benefit, so as, some way or other, "*by virtue of his death and sufferings*, to save us from the "wrath of God, and to procure our escape from eternal "death; this, for aught I know, is all that anybody means "by his dying in our stead. For he that dies with an inten-

" tion to do that benefit for another, or to *save him from* " *death*, doth certainly, to all intents and purposes, die in his " place and stead. And if they will grant this to be their " meaning, the controversy is at an end, and both sides are " agreed in the thing, and do only differ in the phrase and " manner of expression; which is to seek a quarrel, and an " occasion of difference, when there is no real ground for it— " a thing which ought to be very far from reasonable and " peaceable minds. For many of the Socinians say, that our " Saviour's voluntary death and sufferings procured his exalt- " ation at the right hand of God, and power and authority " to forgive sins, and to give eternal life to as many as he " pleased: so that they grant that his obedience and suf- " ferings, in the meritorious consequence of them, redound to " our benefit and advantage as much as we pretend to say " they do: only they are loth, in express terms, to acknow- " ledge that Christ died in our stead; and this for no other " reason, that I can imagine, *but because they have denied it* " *so often and so long.*' "—Vol. II. p. 64.

We have only to say, on this part of the subject, that we heartily commiserate the state of that man's mind, who, whatever Socinian prejudices he may have felt against the most glorious of all doctrines, that of the atonement, does not feel them shaken at least, if not removed, by the arguments adduced in this letter.

The next is devoted to the defence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, which our author evinces in a masterly manner, from the predictions of the ancient prophets, compared with their application in the New Testament; from the conduct, the miracles, and the discourses of our Lord; from the declarations of his apostles; and from the concurrent testimony of the early Christian writers and martyrs, before the Council of Nice. Under the last head, the reader will meet with a copious induction of passages, attesting this grand doctrine, selected with much judgment, and applied with great force. The author all along contends for the divinity of Christ as a *fundamental* tenet; and, of course, will forfeit all pretensions to candour with *rational* Christians, on whose approbation, indeed, he appears to set very little value.

In the next Letter, which is on Conversion, he has treated of the nature and necessity of that new birth, on which our

Lord insisted so strenuously in his discourse with Nicodemus, in a manner which will be as offensive to mere nominal Christians as it will be instructive and satisfactory to serious and humble inquirers after truth. He shows, from well-known and indubitable facts, the reality of such a change; and evinces its indispensable necessity from the express declarations of Scripture, the corruption of human nature, the exalted character of the Deity, and the nature of that pure and perfect felicity to which good men aspire after death. In illustrating this subject, he has made a happy use of Bishop Burnet's Narrative of the Conversion of the Earl of Rochester,—has carefully guarded his readers against the pernicious error of confounding regeneration with baptism,—and has closed the discussion with solving certain difficulties arising out of the subject, which have often perplexed serious minds.

As every effect naturally invites us to contemplate the cause, he passes from conversion to the consideration of Divine Influence, which is the subject of the succeeding Letter: and were we to give our opinion of the comparative merit of the different parts of this volume, we should be inclined to assign the palm to the disquisition on this confessedly mysterious subject. In no part, certainly, is the vigour of the author's very powerful understanding more eminently exerted; in none are the prejudices founded on a pretended philosophy more triumphantly dispelled. He has shown, in the most satisfactory manner, that the belief of an immediate divine influence on the mind, not only accords with the sentiments of the wisest men in pagan times, but that it is rendered highly reasonable by the close analogy it bears to the best-established laws of the material world. Though there are many admirable passages in this portion of the work, which it would gratify us to lay before our readers, we must content ourselves with the following:—

"No person can look into the world with the eye of a phi-
"losopher, and not soon ascertain that the grand theatre of
"phenomena which lies before him is naturally subdivided
"into two great classes of scenery: the one exhibiting con-
"strained, the other voluntary motion; the former charac-
"teristic of matter, the latter as clearly indicating something
"perfectly distinct from matter, and possessing totally oppo-

" site qualities. ' Pulverise matter,' says Saurin, ' give it all " the different forms of which it is susceptible, elevate it to " its highest degree of attainment, make it vast and immense, " moderate or small, luminous or obscure, opaque or trans " parent, there will never result anything but *figures;* and " never will you be able, by all these combinations or divi- " sions, to produce one single sentiment, one single thought ' " The reason is obvious; a substance compounded of innu- " merable parts, which every one acknowledges matter to be, " cannot be the subject of an individual consciousness; the " seat of which *must* be a simple and undivided substance; " as the great Dr. Clarke has long ago irrefragably shown. " Intellect and volition are quite of a different nature from " corporeal figure or motion, and must reside in, or emanate " from, a different kind of being, a kind which, to distinguish " it from matter, is called spirit, or mind. Of these, the one " is necessarily inert, the other essentially active. The one " is characterised by want of animation, life, and even motion, " except as it is urged by something *ab extra:* the other is " living, energetic, self-moving, and possessed of power to " move other things. We often fancy, it is true, that matter " moves matter; but this, strictly speaking, is not correct. " When one wheel, or lever, in a system of machinery, com- " municates motion to matter, it can, at most, only commu- " nicate what it has received; and if you trace the connexion " of the mechanism, you will at length arrive at a first mover, " which first mover is, in fact, *spiritual.* If, for example, it " be an animal, it is evidently the spiritual part of that animal " from whence the motion originally springs. If, otherwise, " it be the descent of a weight, or the fall of water, or the " force of a current of air, or the expansive power of steam, " the action must be ultimately referred to what are styled " powers of nature, that is, to gravitation or elasticity; and " these, it is now well known, cannot be explained by any " allusion to material principles, but to the indesinent opera- " tion of the Great Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and " have our being—the finger of God touching and urging " the various subordinate springs, which, in their turn, move " the several parts of the universe. Thus God acts in all " places, in all times, and upon all persons. The whole ma- " terial world, were it not for his Spirit, would be inanimate

"and inactive: all motion is derived either from his energy, "or from a spirit which he animates; and it is next to "*certain*, that the only primary action is that of spirit, and "the most direct and immediate that of spirit upon spirit."—P. 154.

We doubt not the intelligent reader will be of opinion that the author has gone to the very bottom of this subject, and will feel highly gratified in seeing it placed in so clear and convincing a light; the more so as he has taken care to guard against its most obvious abuse, by showing that the influence for which he contends is not to be expected independent of means,—among which he considers prayer, and a conscientious regard to known duty, as the principal. We earnestly recommend this part of the performance to such of our readers as have, upon too light grounds, imbibed philosophical prejudices against the doctrine contended for; a doctrine which lies at the foundation of all spiritual religion, though treated by many with an excess of insolence and scorn, which can hardly be accounted for without adverting to the injudicious conduct of its advocates.

The important doctrine of Justification by Faith forms the subject of the next Letter in the series. Here, after confirming the position he means to defend, by the authority of the Homilies, he proceeds to a more particular discussion of the subject, under three heads of inquiry: What is meant by justification?—what by faith?—and what is the genuine import of "justification by faith?" Under each of these the reader will meet with much instruction, arising from a very luminous statement of truth, accompanied with happy illustrations. The charge against the doctrine pleaded for, of its tending to licentiousness, is very successfully combated and refuted.

The exhibition of the leading *doctrines* of Christianity is completed in the three following Letters,—on Providence, the Resurrection, and the eternal Existence of Man after Death. We perused, with much satisfaction, the author's masterly defence of a particular providence, the denial of which is, to all practical purposes, equivalent to the denial of a providence altogether. Trust in God is the act of an individual, as all the exercises of piety must necessarily be; so that if the providence of God embraces not the concerns of individuals, no rational foundation can be conceived for ex-

pecting protection from danger, or relief under distress, in answer to prayer. The denial of a particular providence is, it must be confessed, the best possible expedient for keeping God at a distance—and on that account so vehemently insisted on by certain periodical writers, the poison of whose impiety, prepared, it is generally understood, by *hallowed* hands, and distributed through the nation in a popular and seducing vehicle, has met with a powerful antidote and rebuke from Dr. Gregory, who, himself a layman, will be honoured as the champion of that religion which a clergyman has insulted and betrayed.* How is it that the conductors of the publication alluded to allot to this clerical associate the province of libelling religion? Is it that its alliance with nominal sanctity gives rank impiety a new zest, at the same time that its total dereliction of principle more perfectly incorporates the specific design of the article with the general character of the work?

In treating of the Resurrection of the Dead, the author has happily availed himself of the striking analogies which the system of nature presents, as if designed on purpose, as Tertullian more than insinuates, to excite the expectation of such an event. Among others highly deserving attention, we shall present our readers with the following, in the words of Dr. Gregory:—

"Nearly allied to these are the examples of peculiar transformations undergone by various insects, and the state of rest and insensibility which precede those transformations: such as the chrysalis or aurelia state of butterflies, moths, and silk-worms. The myrmeleon formicaleo, of whose larva, and its extraordinary history, Reaumur and Roesel have given accurate descriptions, continues in its insensible or chrysalis state about four weeks. The libellula, or dragon-fly, continues still longer in its state of inaction. Naturalists tell us, that the worm repairs to the margin of its pond, in quest of a convenient place of abode during its insensible state. It attaches itself to a plant, or piece of dry wood, and the skin, which gradually becomes parched and brittle, at last splits opposite to the upper part of the thorax: through this aperture the insect, now become winged, quickly

* See the article on Methodism, in the 'Edinburgh Review.'

"pusnes its way; and, being thus extricated from confine-
"ment, begins to expand its wings, to flutter, and, finally, to
"launch into the air with that gracefulness and ease which
"are peculiar to this majestic tribe. Now, who that saw, for
"the first time, the little pendant coffin in which the insect
"lay entombed, and was ignorant of the transformation of
"which we are now speaking, would ever predict that, in a
"few weeks, perhaps in a few days or hours, it would become
"one of the most elegant and active of *winged* insects?
"And who that contemplates, with the mind of a philosopher,
"this curious transformation, and knows that two years before
"the insect mounts into air, even while it is living in water,
"it has the rudiments of wings, can deny that the body of a
"dead man may, at some future period, be again invested
"with vigour and activity, and soar to regions for which
"some latent organization may have peculiarly fitted it?"—
P. 225.

In descanting on the change that will be effected by the resurrection, when we shall be invested with a glorified body, the language of the author rises to a high pitch of elevation, and exhibits a scene which surpasses the brightest visions of poetry; while the exactness of the delineation, in its most essential lineaments, is attested by the "true sayings of God." The science with which the mind of the author is so richly imbued, enables him to mingle a refined spirit of philosophy with the colours of imagination, which, without diminishing their brightness, compels the assent of the understanding, while it captivates the heart.

In the Letter on the Eternal Existence after Death, the author strenuously opposes the sleep of the soul, and urges formidable, and, we apprehend, irrefragable arguments, for interpreting the passages of Scripture which speak of the everlasting misery of the impenitent, in their obvious and literal sense: nor have we met with a discussion of this awful subject so calculated to carry conviction to a philosophical mind, provided it be disposed to bow to the authority of revelation. His confutation of the reasoning of his opponents, founded on the supposed ambiguity of the terms employed to denote an eternal duration, is particularly masterly.

On the third branch of his subject, which relates to the Duties of Christianity, he is comparatively brief,—not, it is

evident, from his undervaluing their importance, but partly, we conceive, on account of the length of his former discussions, and partly because in this part there is little room for controversy. He has contented himself with arranging the duties of Christianity under three heads—those which relate to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves; and with illustrating and enforcing them by a direct appeal to the language of Scripture.

Having endeavoured to put our readers in possession of the general plan and design of this work, we shall close this article with a few general observations on it.

Dr. Gregory, throughout, denominates the abettors of the simple humanity of Christ Socinians, instead of employing their favourite appellation of unitarians. We rejoice that he has done so, and hope his example will be generally followed. To accede to the appellation of unitarians is to yield up the very point in debate; for ask them what they mean by unitarian, and they will feel no scruple in replying, that it denotes a believer in one God, in opposition to a tritheist. That this is not asserted at random is evident, as well from many other facts, as from the following very remarkable one,—that when a noted academic was, some years since, expelled from the university of Cambridge, amidst various points which he insisted on in his defence, one was this, that it was quite absurd to censure him for avowing unitarian principles, since he never heard but of one person who publicly declared himself *not an unitarian*. Now, what did he mean by this singular assertion? Did he mean to say that he never heard of more than one person who publicly affirmed his belief in a *plurality of persons* in the Godhead? This is impossible. What could he mean, then, but that he never knew but of one person who affirmed himself *not to be a believer in one God?*—which is neither more nor less than to identify the term unitarian with a believer in one God, and the term trinitarian with a believer in three. Let the intelligent public judge whether it is not high time to withhold from these men an appellation which assumes the question at issue, and which cannot be bestowed without being converted into an occasion of insult and triumph over their opponents. There was a time when the learning and moderation of Lardner, and the fame and science of Priestley, combined to throw a transitory

splendour over their system, and to procure from the Christian world a forbearance and complaisance to which they were ill entitled. That time is past. Such *rational* Christians as they are should have discernment to perceive that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of their leader shone around them: it becomes them to bow their spirit to the humbled state of their fortunes. They should learn at last to know themselves. The world is perfectly aware, whether they perceive it or not, that Socinianism is now a headless trunk, bleeding at every vein, and exhibiting no other symptoms of life but its frightful convulsions.

But why should they be offended at being styled Socinians, when it is undeniable that they agree with Socinus in his fundamental position (the simple humanity of Christ), which is all the agreement that subsists between the followers of Calvin or Arminius, and those eminent persons? The Calvinists are far from concurring in every particular with Calvin,—the Arminians, with Arminius; yet neither of them have violently disclaimed these appellations, or considered them as terms of reproach. Why are the Socinians only offended at being denominated after Socinus? Is it because they differ in the nature of Christ's person from that celebrated heresiarch? This they will not pretend. But they differ from him in many respects! In what respects? Is it in those respects in which his sentiments gave most offence to the Christian world? Is it that they have receded from him in that direction which brings them nearer to the generally received doctrine of the church? Just the reverse. In the esteem of all but themselves they have descended many degrees lower in the scale of error, have plunged many fathoms deeper in the gulf of impiety; yet, with an assurance of which they have furnished the only example, they affect to consider themselves injured by being styled Socinians, when they know, in their own consciences, that they differ from Socinus only in pushing the degradation of the Saviour to a much greater length—and that, in the view of the Christian world, their religious delinquencies differ from his only as treason differs from sedition, or sacrilege from theft. The appellation of Socinian, as applied to them, is a term of forbearance, calculated, if they would suffer it, not to expose, but to hide, a part of their shame. Let them assume any

denomination they please, provided it be such as will fairly represent their sentiments. Let them be styled anti-scripturalists, humanitarians, semideists, Priestleians, or Socinians. But let them not be designated by a term which is merely coveted by them for the purpose of chicane and imposture.

Our readers will perceive that the system which Dr. Gregory strenuously abets is orthodoxy; but it is moderate and catholic; it is the orthodoxy of the three first centuries; it is that system which, communicated by Christ and his apostles, pervaded the church long before the confusion of modern sects arose, or even the distinction between protestants and catholics was heard of: it is the orthodoxy which has nourished the root of piety in every age, warmed the breasts of saints and martyrs, and will continue to subsist in the church till the heavens and the earth are no more.

We congratulate the public on the accession of Dr. Gregory to such a cause; and sincerely rejoice that, amidst his multifarious scientific pursuits, he has found time and inclination to meditate so deeply, and to exhibit so successfully, "the truth as it is in Jesus." We hope his example will stimulate other men of science and genius to pursue so noble a career. We will venture to assure them that, upon a dying bed, it will occasion no regret to reflect upon their having enrolled their names with such illustrious laymen as Boyle, Newton, and Locke, in the defence of Christianity.

In a beautiful passage of Euripides, Medea is introduced expressing her surprise that, amidst such a multitude of inventions and inquiries, the art of persuasion, the mistress of human volition, should alone have been neglected. This neglect cannot be imputed to Dr. Gregory. He has united, with extraordinary attainments in the severer sciences, the art of recommending his sentiments with the most impressive effect; and though he is above a solicitude respecting the minuter graces of finished composition, he exhibits, in an eminent degree, the most important ingredients of good writing. He is correct and luminous, and often rises to the tone of the most impassioned feeling. His language is eminently easy, flowing, and idiomatic. The abstractions of science have not in him exerted the influence often imputed to them, of chilling the heart, and impairing the vigour of the imagination. While he reasons with the comprehension

and depth which distinguish the philosopher, he feels with ardour, and paints with force. He is often inspired and transported with his theme. In the midst of pursuits which are not always found to have a propitious effect on the religious character of their votaries, he has found the means of preserving his devotion in its warmth, his faith in its purity, and his sensibility in its infantine freshness and vigour.

We must conclude with earnestly recommending this work to the attentive perusal of young persons whose minds have been cultivated by science and letters; and must be permitted to add, that we are acquainted with no book, in the circle of English literature, which is equally calculated to give persons of that description just views of the evidence, the nature, and the importance of revealed religion.

REVIEW

OF

BELSHAM'S MEMOIRS OF LINDSEY.

Memoirs of the late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, A.M., including a brief Analysis of his Works; together with Anecdotes and Letters of eminent Persons, his Friends and Correspondents: also a general View of the Progress of the Unitarian Doctrine in England and America. By THOMAS BELSHAM, *Minister of the Chapel in Essex-street.* 8vo., pp. xxiv. 544. 1812.

As the life of Mr. Lindsey is evidently adopted as a vehicle for the propagation of Socinian sentiments, we shall be excused for being more copious in our remarks upon it, than the biography of a man of such extreme mediocrity of talents could otherwise possibly justify. If a zealous attachment to any system of opinions can be supposed to be aided by its association with personal reputation, we cannot wonder at finding Mr. Lindsey's fondness for Socinianism so ardent and so persevering, inasmuch as the annals of religion scarcely furnish an instance of a celebrity acquired so entirely by the adoption of a particular creed. Luther and Calvin would have risen to distinction, in all probability, if the Reformation had never been heard of; while the existence of such a man as Mr. Lindsey would not have been known beyond the precincts of his parish, had he not, under a peculiar combination of circumstances, embraced the tenets of Socinus.

His reputation is altogether accidental and factitious. Though the leading events of his life, with one exception, are marked by no striking peculiarities, yet, by the help of a great deal of adventitious matter, Mr. B. has contrived to make it the groundwork of a bulky and not unentertaining volume; disfigured, however, throughout by that languid and inelegant verbosity which characterizes all his compositions. It must be confessed Mr. Belsham has taken care in this work

to exhibit himself as no ascetic, no religious enthusiast, but quite a man of the world; not by a lively delineation of its manners and foibles, still less by a development of the principles by which mankind are actuated, but by such a profusion of compliments bestowed on men of rank and title, and so perfect a prostration before secular grandeur, as has never been paralleled, we suspect, in a Christian divine. At the "pomp and circumstance" of human life this philosopher appears awed and planet-struck, and utterly incapable of exercising that small portion of discrimination with which nature has endowed him. Every nobleman or statesman he has occasion to introduce, is uniformly ushered in with a splendid retinue of gorgeous epithets, in which there are as little taste and variety as if they had been copied verbatim from the rolls at the heralds' office. Orators of pre-eminent powers, together with virtuous and enlightened noblemen, meet us at every turn; and we are not a little surprised at finding so much of the decoration and splendour of this mortal scene in so close contact with the historical details of unitarianism. We have long remarked the eagerness of Socinians to emblazon their system by associations with learning, rank, and fashion; but on no other occasion have we seen this humour carried so far as in these Memoirs.

The leading events of Mr. Lindsey's life are the following. He was born, June 20, 1723, at Middlewich in Cheshire, where his father was a mercer in respectable circumstances, but was afterwards reduced by misfortunes. His mother, whose maiden name was Spencer, was distantly related to the Marlborough family; and previously to her marriage lived twenty years in the family of Frances, Countess of Huntingdon; a circumstance which led to considerable intimacy, that continued for some years, with the celebrated Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who married the son of that lady. Under the patronage of Lady Betty and Lady Ann Hastings, Mr. Lindsey was educated first at a school in the neighbourhood of Middlewich, whence he was removed, and placed under the care of the Rev. Mr. Barnard, master of the free grammar-school in that town, who is represented as a gentleman of distinguished learning and piety. His vacations were usually spent at the mansion of his noble patroness, in the vicinity of Leeds, during the life of Lady Betty Hastings; and, after her decease, at

Ashby Place, near Ashby de la Zouch, in Leicestershire, where Lady Ann then fixed her residence. In the eighteenth year of his age, May 21, 1741, he was admitted a student at St. John's, Cambridge, where he acquitted himself with credit in his academical exercises, and behaved with such exemplary propriety as to attract the attention of Dr. Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln, who thought fit to intrust him with the care of his grandson, a youth of fifteen. He was elected fellow of St. John's College in April, 1747. Having been ordained by Bishop Gibson, he was, at the recommendation of Lady Ann Hastings, presented to a chapel in Spital Square, by Sir George Wheler. In a short time after his settlement in London, the Duke of Somerset received him into his house in the capacity of domestic chaplain. He continued, after the decease of that nobleman, to reside some time with the duchess dowager, better known by the title of Countess of Hertford; and, at her request, he accompanied her grandson, the present Duke of Northumberland, then about nine years of age, and in a delicate state of health, to the continent, where he continued two years; at the expiration of which time he brought back his noble pupil, improved both in his health and learning. From this distinguished personage he continued to receive attentions and favours as long as he lived. Immediately after his return from the continent, he was presented by the Earl of Northumberland to the valuable rectory of Kirkby Whiske, in the North Riding of Yorkshire; at first, under condition to resign it when the person for whom it was intended should come of age; but this young man dying a short time afterwards, it was given to Mr. Lindsey unconditionally, in the usual form. In this very retired situation Mr. Lindsey continued about three years; and during his residence in Yorkshire he became acquainted with the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond; a circumstance which led to important consequences, and to which he was indebted, under Providence, for the most important blessing of his life.

In the year 1756, at the request of the Huntingdon family, he resigned the living of Kirkby Whiske for the living of Piddletown, in Dorsetshire, which was in the gift of the Earl of Huntingdon. In this place he lived seven years; and, in 1760, married Miss Elsworth, the stepdaughter of Archdeacon Blackburne,—a lady whose principles were congenial with

his own, and who is represented as possessed of a superior understanding and of exalted virtue. It was during his residence in that situation that he first began to entertain scruples concerning the lawfulness of trinitarian worship, and of his continuing to officiate in the established church. It appears he had, from his early youth, disapproved of some things in the Thirty-nine Articles. Some years afterwards these doubts were matured into a full conviction that the divinity of Christ was an erroneous tenet, and that the Father was the sole object of worship; in consequence of which, while in Dorsetshire, he took some previous steps with a view to quitting his preferment in the church. In the year 1762, upon the appointment of the late Duke of Northumberland to be lord lieutenant of Ireland, he was strongly urged to accept the place of chaplain to his grace; which, from the preference he gave to a retired situation, he declined. An opportunity occurring, the year following, of exchanging his living for that of Catterick in Yorkshire, he made the exchange, for the sake of enjoying the society of Archdeacon Blackburne and his family, who lived in that neighbourhood. On this occasion Mr. Belsham justly remarks, "It may appear singular that "Mr. Lindsey could submit to that renewed subscription "which was requisite in order to his induction to a new "living.

"And the case," he adds, "appears the more extraordinary, "as many clergymen, who, in consequence of a revolution in "their opinions, had become dissatisfied with the Articles, "would never, for the sake of obtaining the most valuable "preferment, subscribe them again, though while they were "permitted to remain unmolested they did not perceive it to "be their duty to retire from the church."—P. 17.

The extreme want of candour and sincerity evinced by such conduct is very unsatisfactorily apologised for by Mr. Lindsey, and is very gently reproved by Mr. Belsham. The principal plea alleged by Mr. L. in defence of himself is, that as he continued to officiate in the forms of the liturgy, his renewed subscription gave him little concern, since he considered himself as virtually repeating his subscription. At length he brought himself, he says, to consider the trinitarian forms in the liturgy, and the invocations at the entrance of the litany, as—

"A threefold representation of the one God, the Father "governing all things by himself and by his Son and Spirit; "and as a threefold way of addressing him as a Creator, and "original benevolent cause of all things, as Redeemer of "mankind by his Son, and their Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit." —P. 23.

How far he was influenced by mercenary considerations in retaining his station under such circumstances it is impossible to say; but that he was guilty of much collusion and impious prevarication in this affair cannot be reasonably doubted. Nor is there any species of simulation or dissimulation in religion which might not be justified on pretences equally plausible; and when we recollect that Mr. L. persisted in that conduct for a series of years, we shall find it difficult to conceive of him as that prodigy of virtue which Mr. Belsham represents him. "He must be a severe moralist," says Mr. B. "whom such a concession does not satisfy." And what is this concession that is to stop every mouth, and to convert censure into praise? We will give it in Mr. L.'s own words: it is this:

"Not," says he, "that I now justify myself therein; yea, "rather I condemn myself. But as I have humble hope of "the divine forgiveness, let not men be too rigid in their "censures."—P. 24.

It is impossible to conceive a confession of conduct extremely criminal, in terms of lighter reprehension; but, agreeably to the theory of Mr. B., the merit of repentance so much exceeds the moral turpitude of transgression, that the faintest indications of it transport him with admiration. For our parts, were we not aware of the tendency of Socinianism to produce a most attenuated conception of the evil of sin, we should have expected to find such insincerity and impiety deplored in the strongest language of penitential sorrow. As we wish, however, to do ample justice to the real virtues of Mr. L., we feel a pleasure in quoting the following account of the manner in which he conducted himself while he was rector of Catterick.

"No sooner was he settled," says his biographer, "in his "new situation, than he applied himself with great assiduity, "in his extensive and populous parish, to perform the duties "of a parochial minister. He regularly officiated twice on

" the Sunday in his parish church, and in the interval between " the services he catechised young people. He visited the " sick, he relieved the poor, he established and supported " charity schools for the children, he spent considerable sums " of money in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in " providing medicines for the diseased, and in purchasing and " distributing books for the instruction of the ignorant. In " his domestic arrangements the greatest economy was ob- " served, that he and his excellent lady might have the " greater surplus to expend in liberality and charity; for it " was a rule with him to lay up nothing from the income of " his living."—P. 26.

This is unquestionably a pleasing picture of the character of an exemplary Christian pastor. It does not appear that any considerable success attended his labours. On this head he contents himself with expressing a faint hope that some of the seed he had sowed might not be lost.

In this situation he continued ten years, till a dangerous fit of sickness roused his conscience, and rendered his continuance in the discharge of his ecclesiastical functions insupportable. We are far from wishing to depreciate the value of that sacrifice which Mr. Lindsey tardily and reluctantly made to the claims of conscience; but we cannot conceal our surprise that a measure to which he was forced, in order to quell the apprehensions he most justly entertained of the displeasure of the Almighty, after a system of prevarication persisted in for upwards of ten years, should be extolled in terms which can only be applied with propriety to instances of heroic virtue. To prefer the surrender of certain worldly advantages to a perseverance in conduct highly criminal, evinces a mind not utterly insensible to the force of moral obligation—and nothing more. Our admiration must be reserved for a higher species of excellence; for an adherence to the side of delicacy and honour, where many plausibilities might be urged to the contrary; or a resolute pursuit of the path of virtue, when it is obstructed by the last extremities of evil. Mr. Lindsey renounced, it is true, a respectable and lucrative situation in the church, rather than continue any longer in the practice of what he considered as idolatry. But he was unincumbered with a family; he possessed some personal property; and enjoyed the friendship of several great and noble personages,

who were never likely to suffer him to sink into absolute poverty. He merely descended to the level where many of the best, and some of the greatest of men, have chosen to place themselves, and where his friend Dr. Priestley, whose talents would have commanded any preferment in the church, chose, from an attachment to the same principles, to remain for life. We approve his resignation of his living; but we confess we are more disposed to wonder that he could reconcile himself to continue in his situation so long, than that he should feel himself compelled to quit it at last.

This event took place in the year 1773; after which he came to London, and a plan was set on foot for opening a chapel for him in the metropolis, where, retaining the use of a liturgy modified agreeably to his views, he might promulgate the tenets of Socinus. Many persons, Mr. B. informs us, both of the establishment and among the dissenters, aided the undertaking; among whom are particularly enumerated Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price, Samuel Shore, Esq., of Norton Hall, in Yorkshire, and Robert Newton, Esq., of Norton House, in the same village.

These gentlemen, in conjunction with others, entered into a subscription to indemnify him for the necessary expenses incurred in procuring and fitting up his chapel. The place fixed upon for this grand experiment was a room in Essex House, Essex Street, which having before been used as an auction-room, was capable, at a moderate expense, of being turned into a convenient place of worship. Here Mr. L. introduced his improved liturgy, formed very much upon the plan of Dr. Clarke's, but with such variations as corresponded to the difference of his views from those of that celebrated divine. From this period the life of Mr. L. proceeds in a very equable and uniform course, with little worthy of remark, besides the various publications to which the system he had adopted gave birth; and over the congregation formed in Essex Street he continued to preside till his seventieth year, when he thought fit to retire from a public station: after which he lived sixteen years, when he was attacked with a disease which was judged to be a pressure on the brain, and expired in the eighty-sixth year of his age. Such are the outlines of a narrative which Mr. Belsham has contrived to extend to upwards of five hundred octavo pages. It is by no

means our intention to follow the biographer through his boundless excursions, or to criticise every remark which appears to us justly obnoxious to censure. We shall content ourselves with selecting a few passages, and making a few observations, which may serve to illustrate the genius and progress of Socinianism, the promotion of which evidently appears to be the sole object of the writer of these Memoirs.

The secession of Mr. Lindsey from the established church produced much less impression than might have been expected; nor does it appear that his example was followed by one individual among the clergy, until Mr. Disney, his brother-in-law, after the lapse of some years, adopted the same measure, and afterwards became his colleague in the ministry. The establishment of a Socinian chapel with a reformed liturgy in the metropolis, is narrated by our biographer with the utmost pomp, as forming a distinguished epoch in the annals of religion; and undoubtedly great hopes were entertained of its producing a memorable revolution among the episcopalians: but these expectations were frustrated. The auditory, composed chiefly of persons of opulence (among whom the Duke of Grafton made the principal figure), was at no time very numerous; and no similar society was formed from among the members of the established church in any part of the United Kingdom. The utmost that the efforts of Lindsey, Priestley, and others, effected, was to convert the teachers of Arianism among the dissenters into Socinians, who exerted themselves with tolerable success to disseminate their principles in their respective congregations; so that the boasted triumphs of Socinianism consisted in sinking that section of the dissenting body which had already departed from the faith a few degrees lower in the gulf of error. From these very Memoirs under consideration we derive the most convincing evidence that the tenets of Socinus, with respect to the nation at large, have lost ground, and that the people of England are by no means so favourably disposed to them as formerly. They also present us a very full and particular account of the association of a part of the clergy at the Feathers Tavern, to procure relief in the matter of subscription; for which purpose, agreeably to a resolution of the general body, on the 6th of February, 1772, a petition was presented to the House of Commons. The number of the petitioners

amounted to nearly two hundred and fifty, among whom the names of the celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, and Law, bishop of Carlisle, were the most distinguished. Of the state of the public mind in the metropolis we have a striking picture in a letter from John Lee, afterwards solicitor-general, a zealous friend of the discontented clergy. "It will surprise "you who live in the country," says he, "and consequently "have not been informed of the discoveries of the metropolis, "that the Christian religion is not thought to be an object "worthy of the least regard; and that it is not only the most "prudent, but the most virtuous and benevolent thing in the "world, to divert men's minds from such frivolous subjects "with all the dexterity that can be. This is no exaggeration, "I assure you; on the contrary, it seems to be the opinion "(and their conduct will show it) of nine-tenths of both "houses of parliament!" Allowing for some slight exaggeration arising from the chagrin and vexation of the writer, it is still impossible not to perceive, if any credit is due to his statement, that parliament were not in a disposition to feel any conscientious objections to the repeal of the Articles, and that if they opposed such a measure, that opposition originated simply from the fear of innovation, common to politicians. The manner in which the debate was conducted when the affair came actually under the consideration of the house, confirms this conclusion.

There was not one member who expressed his belief in the Articles: it was treated entirely as a political question, without once adverting to its intrinsic merits, as involving a religious controversy; and Mr. Hans Stanley opposed the bringing up of the petition, as it tended to disturb the peace of the country, which, in his opinion, ought to be the subject of a fortieth Article, which would be well worth all the thirty-nine.* With such levity and contempt was the national creed treated at that time. Will the sturdiest champion of Socinianism affirm that a similar discussion in the House of Commons, or in the Upper House, would be conducted in a similar manner at present? or that there would be one member who would contend for the continuance of the Articles on the ground of their intrinsic excellence and verity? The fact is, that through the secularity and irreligion of the clergy,

* See pages 54, 55, of these Memoirs

evangelical truth was nearly effaced from the minds of the members of the establishment in the higher ranks, and that an indolent acquiescence in established formularies had succeeded to the ardour with which the great principles of religion were embraced at the Reformation. Such was the state of the public mind, that in a contest between orthodoxy and heresy, the former proved triumphant merely because it was already established, and had the plea of antiquity and prescription in its favour. Since that period vital religion has revived in the national church; the flame of controversy has been widely spread; the inconsistency of Socinianism with the Scriptures, together with its genuine tendency and character, have been fully developed; it has lost the attraction of novelty; it has revolted the minds of men by its impiety; and, having been weighed in the balance, it has been found wanting. If among the clergy there still subsist a small remnant who are attached to those unscriptural tenets, they are content with being connived at, and nothing could now urge them to the imprudence of presenting their claims for legal security to the legislature. We hear nothing of an intention to renew the scenes which took place at the Feathers Tavern in 1772.

We consider this as a decisive proof that Socinianism has lost ground in the nation, notwithstanding its prevalence in societies of a certain description among the dissenters. Those who never formally renounced the orthodox doctrine, have, in consequence of recent discussions, become more than ever attached to it: while that class of dissenters who were already moving in an heretical direction have reposed in Socinianism as their natural centre of gravity. From several other circumstances recorded in these Memoirs, the same inference may be drawn with respect to the discredit under which this system lies at present, compared with the countenance and indulgence with which it was received thirty or forty years back. While Mr. Lindsey was deliberating on the propriety of quitting his living, it was suggested to him by Dr. Priestley, that he might continue to officiate, by making such alterations in the public offices of devotion as would accord with his peculiar views. "Nor was there any ground to suspect," says Mr. B., "that he would have met with any molestation "from his superiors." Mr. Chambers, who held the living of

Oundle, in Northamptonshire, Mr. Disney, for many years, and others, did so, without being called to account for their conduct. We should be sorry to express ourselves with an improper degree of confidence; but we may venture to express a firm persuasion, that such a silent repeal of the doctrine of the church by the mere authority of a parochial minister would not now be permitted to pass unnoticed, or uncensured, in any part of the kingdom. The dignitaries of the church are alive to the importance of the distinguishing truths of Christianity, and would show themselves prompt and eager, as appears from recent instances, to discourage the open disavowal of them. We have no hesitation in asserting, that the hope of rendering the tenets of the Polish heresiarch popular and prevalent throughout this nation, was at no period so completely extinguished as at the present; and from a certain air of despondency which the memorialist of Lindsey betrays, amidst all his gasconades, we are convinced he is of the same opinion. The disposition on all occasions to vaunt of their success, and to predict, with great confidence, the speedy triumph of their principles, is a peculiar feature in the character of modern Socinians; and the absurd and exaggerated statements of matters of fact into which this propensity betrays them, are truly ludicrous. All other sorts of enthusiasts of whom we have either heard or read are, in this respect, cold and phlegmatic compared with them. In various extracts from the letters of Mr. Lindsey's correspondents, and of others, representations are made of numerous and rapid conversions to Socinianism, which Mr. B., from a regard to truth and decency, finds it necessary to correct and apologize for, as the effusion of well-intended but intemperate zeal. The boast of success is almost invariably the precursor of a statement on the part of Mr. B., in which it is either repealed or qualified; and it is but doing him justice to say, that his judgment and experience have exempted him from those illusions and deceptions of which his party have become the easy dupes. We had been confidently informed, for instance, that almost all the people of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts, were becoming Socinians, and that the ministers, with the exception of one or two, had already declared themselves such; when it appears, from the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Wells, himself a Socinian, and an inhabitant of that city

that there is but one professedly Unitarian chapel throughout New England: and so little sanguine is he with respect to the spread of that doctrine, that he strongly deprecates its discussion, from a conviction that it will issue in producing among the body of the people a more confirmed attachment to orthodoxy.* It is also worthy of remark, that these extravagant boasts of success are not accompanied with the slightest advertence to the moral or spiritual effects which the Socinian doctrine produces on the character: this is a consideration which rarely, if ever, enters into the mind of its most zealous abettors, who appear to be perfectly satisfied if they can but accomplish a change of sentiment, however inefficacious to all practical purposes. Their converts are merely proselyted to an opinion, without pretending to be converted to God: and if they are not as much injured by the change as the proselytes made by the Pharisees of old, it must be ascribed to causes totally distinct from the superior excellence of the tenets which they have embraced. They have been taught to discard the worship of Christ, and to abjure all dependence upon him as a Saviour—an admirable preparation, it must be confessed, for a devout and holy life. Let the abettors of these doctrines produce, if they can, a single instance of a person, who, in consequence of embracing them, was reclaimed from a vicious to a virtuous life, from a neglect of serious piety to an exemplary discharge of its obligations and duties; and their success, to whatever extent it has been realized, would suggest an argument in their favour deserving some attention. But who is ignorant that among the endless fluctuations of fashions and opinions recorded in the annals of religion, the most absurd and pernicious systems have flourished for awhile; and that Arianism, for instance, which these men profess to abhor almost as much as orthodoxy, prevailed to such a degree, for years, as to threaten to become the prevalent religion of Christendom?† Socinianism can boast but few converts compared with infidelity; in England, of late, they have gone hand in hand, and their progress has been simultaneous, derived from the same causes, and productive of the same effects. Shall we therefore affirm that infidelity is

* See his Letter in the Appendix of the Memoirs.

† See the second book of Sulpicius Severus, chap. 35 "Tum hæresis Arii prorupit *totumque orbem* invecto errore turbaverat."

to be rejected with less confidence, because it possesses in reality that to which Socinianism only pretends? When we reflect on the inert and torpid character of Socinianism, it is surprising any serious expectation should be entertained of its final triumph. From innumerable passages in these Memoirs, it appears that the far greater number of those who have embraced it in the established church have been content to retain their situation; and it is certain that of the two hundred and fifty who joined in the petition for relief in the matter of subscription, Mr. Lindsey was the only person who made any sacrifice of emolument to principle. We find both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Belsham incessantly reproaching unitarians with timidity, in declining the avowal of their sentiments; and the former remarking, with just indignation, that, amidst the multitudes that concurred in his views, there was but one member of the established church that afforded him any pecuniary aid towards defraying the necessary expenses attendant on the opening of his chapel. The avowal of Socinianism among dissenters has rarely been followed by worldly privations; and in the Church of England, where such consequences must have ensued, it has not been made. Except in the instances of Lindsey, Jebb, and a very few others, the converts to Socinianism have stooped to the meanest prevarication, and the most sacrilegious hypocrisy, rather than sacrifice their worldly emolument and honours. Compare this with the conduct of the puritans, in the reign of Charles the Second, who, though the points at issue were comparatively trifling and insignificant, chose, to the number of two thousand, to encounter every species of obloquy and distress, rather than do violence to their conscience; and learn the difference between the heroism inspired by Christian principle, and the base and pusillanimous spirit of heresy. What an infatuation to expect that a system which inspires its votaries with no better sentiments and feelings than are evinced by these decisive facts, will ever become the prevailing belief; a system which, while it militates against every page of revelation, is betrayed by the selfish timidity of its followers! The system of Socinus is a cold negation: the whole secret of it consists in thinking meanly of Christ; and what tendency such a mode of thinking can have to inspire elevation or ardour, it is not easy to comprehend. If it is calculated to

relieve the conscience of a weight, which the principles of orthodoxy render it difficult to shake off, without complying with the conditions of the Gospel, infidelity answers the same purpose still better, and possesses a still higher degree of simplicity,—meaning by that term what Socinians generally mean —the total absence of mystery.

Great part of these Memoirs is occupied in giving a copious analysis of Mr L.'s publications; which possessing no intrinsic merit, nor having excited more than a temporary interest, it would be trifling with the patience of our readers to suppose they could derive either entertainment or instruction from seeing them abridged. Of Mr. Lindsey, considered as a writer, it is sufficient to observe that the measure of intellect he displayed was the most ordinary, and that he was not possessed of the power, in its lowest degree, of either inventing what was rare, or embellishing what was common. He was perspicuous, because he contented himself, on all occasions, with the most commonplace thoughts; he was simple, because he aspired to nothing more than to convey his meaning in intelligible terms, without the least conception of force, elegance, or harmony. Though his writings are replete with professions of unbounded liberality and candour, it is evident from his treatment of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, that he was indulgent only towards those who approached nearer to infidelity than himself. Nothing can be conceived more splenetic and acrimonious than his examination of that ingenious author's Plea for the Divinity of Christ, who, in return for compliments and condescensions which, however unworthy of the cause he was defending, were sufficient to soften a Cerberus, met with nothing but rudeness and insolence. It was truly amusing to see the imbecility of a Lindsey assuming the airs of a Warburton. Throughout the whole of that publication, he affects to consider Mr. Robinson as a mere superficial declaimer; although his friend, Archdeacon Blackburne, Mr. B. informs us, always spoke of the Plea as a most able and unanswerable performance. So much for the modesty of this heretical confessor!

But it is time to leave Mr L. to that oblivion which is the infallible destiny of him and of his works, and to proceed to make a few remarks on the narrative. and the miscellaneous strictures of his biographer. In the first place, we congratu-

late him on his abatement of that tone of arrogance which so strikingly characterised his former publications. Not that we ever expect him to exhibit himself in the light of an amiable or unassuming writer, which would be for the Ethiopian to change his skin; but it is with pleasure we remark less insolence and dogmatism than he has displayed on other occasions. He writes like a person who is conscious he is supporting a sinking cause; an air of despondency may be detected amidst his efforts to appear gay and cheerful. He knows perfectly well that he is celebrating the obsequies, not the triumph of Socinianism; and from the little advantage it has derived from its former efforts, his vanity will not prevent him from suspecting that he is giving ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

In this, as in all his former publications, he evinces a total ignorance of human nature, together with that propensity to overrate the practical effect of metaphysical theories, which almost invariably attaches to metaphysicians of an inferior order. He who invents a metaphysical system, which possesses the least claim to public regard, must have paid a profound attention to the actual constitution of human nature. He must have explored the most delicate and intricate processes of the mind, and kept a vigilant eye on the various phenomena which it presents. He is necessarily *above* his theory, having been conducted to it by an independent effort of thought. He has not adjusted his observations to his hypothesis, but his hypothesis to his observations. The humble disciple, the implicit admirer, proceeds too often in a directly opposite manner. All he knows of the mental constitution in its more intricate movements, he derives from the system prepared to his hand, which he adopts with all its crudities, and confidently employs as the key which is to unlock all the recesses of nature. Having been accustomed to contemplate the human mind with a constant view to the technical arrangements to which he has devoted himself, he estimates the practical importance of metaphysical theories by what has passed in his own mind. We are fully convinced that the bulk of mankind are very little influenced by metaphysical theories; and that even in minds which are more prone to speculation, metaphysical dogmas are seldom so firmly embraced, or so deeply realized, as to be productive of important practical effects. The advocate of necessity, and the cham-

pion of liberty, will, in the same state of moral proficiency, act precisely the same part, in similar circumstances. Mr. Belsham, however, in the plenitude of his enthusiasm for the doctrine of philosophical necessity, ascribes without hesitation the ruin of multitudes of young persons to their embracing the opposite tenet. It is truly surprising, that he, who was so quick-sighted as to perceive the tendency of the notion of liberty to promote immoral conduct, should entertain no suspicion of a similar tendency in the doctrine of God's being the Author of sin, which Mr. B. repeatedly asserts.

"The true solution of the first difficulty," says Mr. B., "whether God be the author of sin, appears to be this: that "God is, strictly speaking, the author of evil; but that, in "the first place, he never ordains or permits evil but with "the view to the production of a greater good, which could "not have existed without it. And, secondly, that though "God is the author of evil, both natural and moral, he is not "the approver of evil; he does not delight in it for its own "sake; it must be the object of his aversion, and what he "would never permit or endure, if the good he intends could "have been accomplished without it. With respect to the "justice of punishment, the best and only philosophical so-"lution of it is that under the divine government all punish-"ment is remedial. Moral evil is the disease, punishment is "the process of cure, of greater or less intensity, and of "longer or shorter duration, in proportion to the malignity "and inveteracy of the malady, but ultimately of sovereign "efficacy, under the divine government, to operate a perfect "cure; so that those whose vices have been the means of "proving, purifying, and exalting the virtues of others, shall, "in the end, share with them in their virtue and their triumph, "and *the impartial justice* and infinite benevolence of the "Divine Being will be made known, adored, and celebrated "through the whole created universe."—Pp. 323, 324.

The malignant tendency of such representations as the foregoing is so obvious, that it is quite unnecessary to point it out to our readers. How vain are all precautions against sin, if in all cases it is produced by the irresistible power of the Deity! And what motive can remain for avoiding it, if it is certain of being ultimately crowned with happiness and glory! The distinction between producing it, and approving

of it for its own sake, with which the doctrine is attempted to be palliated, is perfectly futile; for this is ascribing no more to the Deity than must, in justice, be ascribed to the most profligate of mankind, who never commit sin for its own sake, but purely with a view to certain advantages with which it is connected: and the difference between the two cases arises not from any distinction in the moral character of the proceeding, but simply from the superior comprehension of view with which the conduct of the Deity is accompanied. As the perpetration of vice is, upon this system, a calamity, not a crime, it is but fitting and necessary it should receive a compensation: and for this Mr. B. has provided, by representing the ultimate happiness of such as have been the means of purifying the virtue of others by their vices, as the effect of the impartial justice of the Deity. Persons of this description are, it seems, a species of benefactors; and it is but right they should, in due time, be rewarded. They are the scavengers of the universe; and, having done a great deal of necessary, though dirty, work, they are entitled to commiseration at present, and to proportionable compensation in another state of being. How admirably are these views adapted to promote a horror of sin! What tenderness of conscience, fear of offending, deep humility and penitence, may we expect to find in Mr. Belsham and in his admirers! Doubtless, their eyes are a fountain of tears, which, like Jeremiah, they are incessantly pouring out for those vices and impieties which are the sure and certain pledges of endless felicity!

To expect Mr. B. to write a bulky volume, without intermingling a large portion of infidelity, would be to expect grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles. In the work under consideration, he fully maintains the consistency of his character. He more than insinuates his disbelief of a great, if not the greater, part of the Mosaic history. Mr. Lindsey having expressed himself in terms of just reprehension with respect to the conduct of those who reject the books of Moses, Mr. B. takes upon him to censure the severity of his friend.

"But surely, if the venerable writer," says he, "had re-
"considered the case with his usual calmness and impartiality,
"he would have seen that a person may be a very firm be-
"liever in the divine mission and doctrine of Christ, and be
"well satisfied with the general evidence of the divine lega-

"tion of Moses, while he at the same time may entertain very "serious doubts, whether the books commonly attributed "to Moses were really written throughout by him, and "whether either the narrative or the institute exist at pre- "sent exactly in the form in which he delivered them."—P. 408.

But, supposing the narrative to be in certain points false, the institution misrepresented and disguised, and the books which we term the Pentateuch the production of some unknown author,—who does not see the impossibility of separating the truth from the falsehood, and of attaching, on any consistent principles, to any part of it the credit due to a divine communication? The spirit of infidelity evinced in these passages is little different from that which pervades the pages of Bolingbroke and Voltaire. But such is the genuine progress of Socinianism: it begins with denying some of the clearest propositions in the New Testament, in order to which its claims to inspiration must be weakened or annulled; whence it proceeds to dispute the authority of the Old, till the whole Bible is virtually set aside as the umpire of controversy. Among the other sublime discoveries to which Mr. B. has been led by a critical investigation of the writings of the New Testament, one is, that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses no authority whatever; or, to use a term of his own invention, no *external* authority. Speaking of the Duke of Grafton, he says—

"In a paper dated Jan. 1, 1792, the duke expressed a "belief that the exaltation of Christ to dominion and autho- "rity was the consequence of his submission to those suffer- "ings which 'were so efficacious, perhaps so necessary, to "his own glory, and to the future happiness of mankind.' "His mind seems at this time to have been perplexed with "some obscure notion of the unscriptural doctrines of "meritorious sufferings, and of the external authority of "Jesus Christ; which, however, he regards as a mystery, "which 'it will probably never be given to man in the "present state' to understand, and which therefore 'must "consequently be ranked among those articles, the belief of "which cannot be necessary to salvation.'"—P. 327.

Though the apostles have affirmed the exaltation of the Saviour to the government of the universe, in every variety

of form which language can supply,—though he himself declared that all power was given to him in heaven and in earth,—his possession of external authority is unblushingly asserted to be an unscriptural tenet. We challenge Mr. B. to invent terms more strongly expressive of the highest dominion and authority than those which the inspired writers have employed in describing the exaltation of the Saviour. We can regard this assertion of Mr. Belsham's in no other light than as a specimen of that theological audacity which forms the principal feature in that gentleman's character, and which, happily, can have no other effect than to inspire a complete abhorrence of the system which renders such a procedure necessary. We cheerfully accept, however, the concession implied in these daring positions, that the doctrine of the meritorious suffering of Christ is inseparably connected with his exaltation; and as the latter cannot, without the utmost indecency, be denied, the former follows of course. We can annex no other meaning to the epithet *external*, as applied to *authority*, than what might be more clearly expressed by the term *personal;* or, in other words, Mr. B.'s intention is to assert that our Lord possesses no authority whatever, apart from the credit due to his mission and to his doctrine; and that the Christian church is in no other sense governed by Christ than the Jews might be affirmed to be governed by Moses after his decease. It must be obvious, however, to every one, that this is not to explain, but boldly and unequivocally to contradict, the writings of the apostles on this important subject.

We shall close these strictures on Mr. Belsham, by quoting one passage more, which illustrates at once his insufferable arrogance and his servile deference to authority.

"What childish simplicity and ignorance," says he, "does "it betray in some, to feign or to feel alarmed at the tendency "of those doctrines which are avowed by such men as Lindsey, "Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb, and which are represented by "them as lying at the foundation of all right views of the "divine government, of all rational piety and virtuous "practice, and of all rational and substantial consolation! "And yet such persons feel no alarm at the vulgar notion of "philosophical liberty, or the power of acting differently in "circumstances precisely similar; a notion, the fond per-

"suasion of which encourages men to venture into circum-
"stances of moral danger, and to which thousands of the
"young and inexperienced especially are daily falling vic-
"tims."—P. 394.

The arrogance, folly, and absurdity of this passage, are scarcely to be paralleled, even in the writings of its inimitable author. The most celebrated metaphysicians and reasoners in every age and in every country—Malebranche, Cudworth, Clarke, Butler, Chillingworth, Reid, and innumerable others, who have avowed the strongest apprehensions of the immoral tendency of the doctrine of fatalism, or, as it has been styled, philosophical necessity, are consigned by a writer who has not capacity sufficient to appreciate their powers, much less to rival their productions, to the reproach of childish simplicity and ignorance; and this for no other reason than their presuming to differ in opinion from Lindsey, Priestley, Hartley, and Jebb! What is this but to enjoin implicit faith? And why might not a Roman Catholic, with equal propriety, accuse of childish simplicity and ignorance those who should suspect the pernicious tendency of sentiments held by Pascal, Fenelon, and Bossuet? We must be permitted to remind Mr. B. that we hold his pretensions to a liberal and independent turn of thought extremely cheap; that possessing nothing original even in his opinions, to say nothing of his genius, his most vigorous efforts have terminated in his becoming a mere train-bearer in a very insignificant procession.

Having already detained our readers longer on this article than we ought, we should now put a period to our remarks, but that there is one particular connected with the history of Mr. Lindsey, which we conceive has been too often set in such a light as is calculated to produce erroneous impressions. We refer to the resignation of his living, in deference to his religious scruples. He is, on this account, everywhere designated by Mr. Belsham by the title of "the venerable confessor;" and what is more to be wondered at, the late excellent Job Orton, in a letter to his friend, the late Rev. Mr. Palmer, of Hackney, speaks of him in the following terms:

"'Were I to publish an account of silenced and ejected
"ministers, I should be strongly tempted to insert Mr. Lindsey
"in the list he mentions in his Apology with so much vene-

"ration. He certainly deserves as much respect and honour "as any of them for the part he has acted. Perhaps few of "them exceeded him in learning and piety. I venerate him "as I would any of your confessors. As to his particular "sentiments, they are nothing to me. An honest, pious man, "who makes such a sacrifice to truth and conscience as he "has done, is a glorious character, and deserves the respect, "esteem, and veneration of every true Christian.' "

We have no scruple in asserting that this qualified encomium is repugnant to reason, to Scripture, and to the sentiments of the best and purest ages of the Christian church. To pass over the absurdity of denominating Mr. L. a silenced and ejected minister, merely on account of his voluntary withdrawment from a community whose distinguishing tenets he had abandoned, we are far from conceiving that the merit attached to his conduct on this occasion was of such an order as to entitle him for a moment to rank with confessors and martyrs. To the praise of manly integrity, for quitting a situation he could no longer conscientiously retain, we are ready to acknowledge Mr. L. fully entitled. We are cordially disposed to admire integrity wherever we perceive it; and we admire it the more in the present instance, because such examples of it, among beneficed ecclesiastics, have been rare. But we cannot permit ourselves to place sacrifices to error on the same footing as sacrifices to truth, without annihilating their distinction. If revealed truth possess anything of sanctity and importance, the profession of it must be more meritorious than the profession of its opposite; and, by consequence, sacrifices made to that profession must be more estimable. He who suffers in the cause of truth is entitled to our admiration; he who suffers in the defence of error and delusion, to our commiseration: which are unquestionably very different sentiments. If truth is calculated to elevate and sanctify the character, he who cheerfully sacrifices his worldly emolument to its pursuit must be supposed to have partaken in no common degree of its salutary operation. He who suffers equal privations in the propagation of error, evinces, it is confessed, his possession of moral honesty; but unless persuasion could convert error into truth, it is impossible it should impart to error the effects of truth. Previous to the profession of any tenets whatever,

there lies an obligation on all, to whom the light of the Gospel extends, to believe the truth. We are bound to confess Christ before men, only because we are bound to believe on him. But if, instead of believing on him, we deny him in his essential characters, which is the case with Socinians, the sincerity of that denial will indeed rescue us from the guilt of prevarication, but not from that of unbelief. It is possible, at least, since some sort of faith in Christ is positively asserted to be essential to salvation, that the tenets of the Socinians may be such as to exclude that faith: that it does exclude it, no orthodox man can consistently deny; and how absurd it were to suppose a man should be entitled to the reward of a Christian confessor, merely for denying, *bonâ fide*, the doctrine which is essential to salvation! The sincerity which accompanies his profession entitles him to the reward of a confessor: the error of the doctrine which he professes exposes him at the same time to the sentence of condemnation as an unbeliever! If we lose sight of Socinianism for a moment, and suppose an unbeliever in Christianity *in toto*, to suffer for the voluntary and sincere promulgation of his tenets, we would ask Mr. Orton in what rank he would be inclined to place his infidel confessor. Is *he* entitled to rank with *any* of the confessors? If he is, our Saviour's terms of salvation are essentially altered; and though he pronounces an anathema on him who shall deny him before men, the sturdy and unshaken denial of him in the face of worldly discouragement would answer, it seems, as well as a similar confession. Men are left at their liberty in this respect; and they are equally secure of eternal happiness, whether they deny or whether they confess the Saviour, providing they do it firmly and sincerely. If these consequences appear shocking, and he be forced to assert the negative, then t is admitted that the truth of the doctrine confessed enters essentially into the inquiry, whether he who suffers for his opinions is to be, *ipso facto*, classed with Christian confessors. Let it be remembered that we are not denying that he who hazards his worldly interest rather than conceal or dissemble his tenets, how false or dangerous soever they may be, is an honest man, and, *quoad hoc*, acts a virtuous part,—but that he is entitled to the same kind of approbation with the champion of truth. That the view we have taken of the subject is

consonant to the Scriptures, will not be doubted by those who recollect that St. John rests his attachment to Gaius and to the elect lady, on the truth which dwelt in them; that he professed no Christian attachment but for the truth's sake; and that he forbade Christians to exercise hospitality, or to show the least indication of friendship, to those who taught any other doctrine than that which he and his fellow-apostles had taught. The source of the confusion and absurdity which necessarily attach to the opinions of Mr. Orton and others, here expressed on this subject, consists in their confounding together moral sincerity and Christian piety. We are perfectly willing to admit that the latter cannot subsist without the former; but we are equally certain that the former is by no means so comprehensive as necessarily to include the latter. We should have imagined it unnecessary to enter into an elaborate defence of so plain a position as this, that it is one thing to be what the world styles an honest man, and another to be a Christian—a distinction, obvious as it is, sufficient to solve the whole mystery, and to account for the conduct of Mr. L., without adopting the unmeaning jargon of his biographer, who styles him, in innumerable places, the *venerable confessor*. How repugnant the language we have been endeavouring to expose is to that which was held in the purest and best ages of the church, must be obvious to all who are competently acquainted with ecclesiastical history. The Marcionites, we are informed by Eusebius, boasted of their having furnished a multitude of martyrs; but they were not the less on that account considered as deniers of Christ. Hence, when orthodox Christians happened occasionally to meet at the places of martyrdom with Montanists and Manichæans, they refused to hold the least communion with them, lest they should be supposed to consent to their errors.* In a word, the *nature* of the doctrine professed must be taken into consideration before we can determine that profession to be a Christian profession; nor is martyrdom entitled to the high veneration justly bestowed on acts of heroic piety, on any other ground than its being, what the term imports, an *attestation of the truth*. It is the saint which makes the martyr, not the martyr the saint.

* Euseb., lib. 5, c. 14.

GENERAL INDEX.

Annual Parliaments recommended, 187-189.

Arbitrary power, 159; approaches towards it in the reign of George III., 218; argument in its favour, 238.

Aristotle, his remark on tragedy, 332; on morals, 358.

Associations, origin of the political societies so called, formed at the close of the last century, 178: unsupported by expedience or necessity, 179; their hostility to the freedom of the press, 180; their impolicy, *ib.*; their silence on the subject of political abuses, 181; their attachment to the principles of arbitrary power, 83, 184.

Atheism, its effects on the French Revolution, 277-290; presumption and absurdity, 433.

Atonement of Christ, its importance, 17.

Belsham, Rev. T. His 'Memoirs of the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey,' review of, 543-565; slight effect produced by his secession from the Established Church, 550; petition of certain clergymen for relief in the matter of subscription, 554; decline of Socinianism in England, 552-556; character of Mr. Lindsey's publications, 556; his extravagant estimate of the practical effect of metaphysical theories, *ib.*; exposure of his assertion that God is the author of sin, 558; his disbelief of great part of the Mosaic history, 559; his denial of the external authority of the Saviour, 560; illustration of his arrogance and folly, 561.

Benevolence, 281; distinguished from sensibility, 322.

Benevolent Society at Cambridge, 325-327.

Birmingham riots, 137.

Blackstone's Comm., character of, 449.

Blasphemy punishable by law, 238.

Bolingbroke, 257; his remarks on the funding system, 217.

British Constitution, the provision made for its security and permanence, 179; contradictions between the theory and the practice, 220-224.

Buonaparte, 334; his character described, 368-370.

Burke, Mr., his splendid genius, 196; his theory of the rights of man, 199.

Cambridge, the Baptist Church there, 16; effects of Mr. Hall's first sermon, 17; liberality on the occasion of his illness, 47.

Capital punishments, 451.

Christian, his superiority to the man of the world, 413-416.

Christianity, sufficiency of its evidence, 290-295; its supreme excellence, 292; importance of holding fast its peculiar spirit, 349-351; friendly to the diffusion of knowledge, 381; effect of its corruptions on the French Revolution, 277; not designed to interfere with the social arrangements of mankind, 123; distinction between its objects and those of civil government, 123-125, 141; the principles of freedom cherished by Christianity, 125-129; impropriety of incorporating it with civil government, 208-212; certainty of its eventual triumph, 295.

Church of England, necessity of reform in it, 222.

Civil government, its origin, 179; reason of its institution, and limits of its power, 171; the respect due to it as the ordinance

of God, 340; grounds of submission, 140; its dependence on the will of the people, 200; its measures not to be wantonly and indiscriminately censured, 141; distinction between its objects and the designs of Christianity, 336.
Classics, their effects on morals, 446.
Clergy, hostility of. to evangelical preaching, 480-481; their unpopularity in consequence, 491.
Compliments, Mr. Hall's definition of, 29.
Conscience, its suggestions to be seriously regarded, 418.
Controversy, its advantages, 171.
Creeds, their inefficacy to perpetuate religious belief, 464, 465.
Custance on the Constitution, review of, 448-453; desirableness of general acquaintance with the constitution and laws of the country, 448; recommended to young persons, 450.

De Lolme on the Constitution, 449.
Dissent, reply to the charge that it tends to democracy, 466-469.
Dissenters, historical defence of their conduct, 206-208; ground of their separation from the Established Church, 208; causes of the animosity manifested against them, 212; their attachment to the principles of freedom, 214; reply to the accusation of republicanism, 214-216.
Dissenting ministers, peculiarly bound to understand the principles of freedom, 130-135.
Duelling, 452-453.

Ecclesiastical establishments, incompatible with the spiritual nature of Christianity, 208-211; political evils connected with them, 211; their persecuting spirit, 212-214.
Education, the profligacy and wretchedness of the lower classes mainly owing to the want of, 378; answer to the objection that the education of the poor will make them discontented and insubordinate, 379; importance and extension of religious education, 388.
Edwards, President, Mr. Hall's early and lasting attachment to his writings, 3; observations on his definition of virtue, 284.
Equality of rights defined, 183.
Expediency, in morals, denounced, 353; awful effects of, 355.

Foster's Essays, review of, 427-447; division of authors into two classes, 427; character of the metaphysical class, 427; the popular writers described, 430; general character of Mr. Foster's works, 431; remarks on the manner in which he has eulogised mental decision, 437; observations on the term 'romantic,' 437; adherence to the language of Scripture recommended, 442-444; origin and legitimate use of technical terms stated, 444; a middle course suggested, 445; notice of Mr. Foster's opinions on the study of the classics, 445; criticism on his style, 447.
France, state of, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 470; its state before the revolution, 316; dreadful character of that revolution, 317.
Freedom, disappointment of its friends by the events of the French Revolution, 367; disastrous effects of the successes of Buonaparte, 367-71; Christianity favourable to freedom, 125-29; the puritans distinguished for zeal in its cause, 127; compatibility of the love of freedom with devotional feeling, 143; distinguished from faction, 144.
Freedom of the press; difficulty of

distinguishing between it and licentiousness, 180.
Free inquiry, essential to national welfare, 171; its benefits illustrated by an appeal to history, 172; the establishment of truth its natural result, 175; absurdity of refusing the right of inquiry, 177; impolicy of attempting to suppress it by force, 180-1.
French Revolution, 272; its atheistical character, 276-90; the war occasioned by it, 311-14; its effects on France, 316; in what manner to be regarded, 226.
Future state, the grand discovery of revelation, 406; reasons why it is so commonly disregarded, 408-12; importance of realising our connexion with it, 416.

Gisborne's Sermons, review of, 504-14; their general character, 504; revival of evangelical preaching accompanied at first by a defective inculcation of morality, 505-7; difficulties attending practical preaching, 507-10; morals too frequently separated from Christian doctrine, 509; Mr. Gisborne's sermons commended, as combining both, 510-13; criticisms on his style, 513-14.
God, his existence proved, 259; beneficial influence on the mind of the belief of a Deity, 265-68.
Great Britain, view of the dispensations of Providence towards, 420-422; its political state in 1793, described, 216-227; in 1822, 240.
Gregory's Evidences of Christianity, review of, 515-542; absurdities of scepticism, 518; necessity of divine revelation, 518-520; mysteries of religion defended, 520; authenticity of the Scriptures, 521; external evidences, 522-526; the Gospel a restorative dispensation, 532; sketch of Dr. Gregory's views of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, 532-539; propriety of his designating those who maintain the simple humanity of Christ, 'Socinians,' 539-541; orthodoxy of his theological sentiments, 541; commendation of his style and manner, 542.

Hall, Rev. R., his birth, 1; manner in which he learned to speak and read, *ib.*; first instructors, *ib.*; early thirst for knowledge, 2; books read by him in his childhood, 3; writes essays at the age of ten years, *ib.*; delivers addresses at Kettering at the age of eleven, 4; placed under Dr. Ryland's care at Northampton, 5; enters Bristol Academy, *ib.*; diligence as a student, 6; failure in his first attempts to preach at Bristol, 7; his sermon before an assembly of ministers at Clipstone, 8; set apart to the ministerial office by the church at Arnsby, *ib.*; sent to King's College, Aberdeen, 8; formation of his friendship with Sir James Mackintosh, 10; chosen assistant pastor with Dr. Evans, at Bristol, *ib.*; his popularity, 12; appointed Classical Tutor of Bristol Academy, *ib.*; his attempt to imitate Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, 13; breach with Dr. Evans, 14; Mr. Hall's letter on his death, 15; his removal to Cambridge, *ib.*; death of his father, 17; effect of his first sermon at Cambridge, *ib.*; violence of party-politics in that place, 18; Mr. Hall's opinions on government, *ib.*; publication of his 'Apology for the Freedom of the Press,' 19; his political opinions always the same, 167; acquaintance with Dr. Gregory, 22; his pastoral visits, 24; his encouragement of social prayer-meetings, 25; anecdote illustrating his dislike

of vanity and conceit, *ib.*; his growth in piety, 33; change of views respecting the personality of the Holy Spirit, 34; method of preparation for the pulpit, 38-40, 253; care in writing for the press, 40; commencement of his acquaintance with Dr. Parr, 41; formation of his habit of smoking, *ib.*; Sermon on 'Modern Infidelity,' 43; attendance of members of the University at Mr. Hall's place of worship, 44; attempt to hinder it frustrated by Dr. Mansell, *ib.*; publication of his Sermon on War, 45; sermon on the 'Sentiments proper to the present Crisis,' 46; his retirement to Shelford, *ib.*; first attack of derangement, 47; beneficial effects of these dispensations on Mr. Hall's religious character, 49; his solemn dedication of himself to God, 50-51; retires to Leicestershire, 52; his researches in Biblical criticism, *ib.*; becomes pastor of the Baptist Church at Leicester, *ib.*; success of his ministry there, 53; his marriage, *ib.*; publication of his Review of 'Zeal without Innovation,' 55; his objections to writing reviews, 55-7; his other publications while at Leicester, 35-57; his works on Communion, 57; objection to the presence of strangers during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, 58; forms a distinct church on mixed communion principles, *ib*; his lectures on Unitarianism, *ib.*; removal from Leicester to Bristol, 59; extracts from his private diary, 60; decay of his health, 61; his last sermon at Broadmead, *ib.*; last illness and death, 62-4.

——, Character of Mr. Hall as a preacher, 65-117; strictures on his public prayers, 71-74; each of his sermons had some definite purpose, 74; plainness of his introductions, 75; his method of arguing and illustrating, 77; perfect conception and expression of his thoughts, 77; complete mastery of language, 80; general style of his sermons, *ib.*; advantages derived to his preaching from the study of metaphysics, 87-89; the originality of his sermons, 89; his general theological tenets, 91; his aversion to bold speculations, and attempts to explain the mysteries of Christianity, 93-96; his descriptions of Christian character more brilliant than the visible reality, 104; eminently useful character of his preaching, 113.

Herbert, Lord, 257.

Hey, Mr., strictures on his work entitled 'Happiness and Rights,' 196-205.

Hobbes, 428.

Homer; moral effects of the study of his works, 455.

Horsley, Bishop, his attempt to re-establish the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, 162-165; his inconsistency in affecting to admire the British constitution, 166; his hatred of dissenters, 167.

House of Commons, how managed by the ministry, 188; importance of such a reform as should make it really a representative assembly, 242.

Humanity, the principles on which it is founded, 275; how affected by the infidel system, 275-278.

Hume, his treatise on morals, 357.

Humility, the genuine fruit of religion, 274.

Ignorance, favourable to superstition, 380.

Infidelity, change of measures adopted by its modern advocates. 249-257; the sources of infidelity pointed out, 257, 351;

sketch of its history in England, 257; incapable of cherishing virtue, 260; supplies no adequate motives for the avoidance of vice, 261; the perpetration of enormous crimes its natural result, 263; infidels never distinguished for moral greatness and generous actions, 265; infidelity destroys the moral taste, 266; it promotes the indulgence of vanity or pride, 269-271; of ferocity, 271-277; of unbridled sensuality, 278-284; modern infidelity the first general effort to establish the principles of atheism, 285-287; its diffusion among the common people a peculiar and alarming symptom, 287; the very substance of morals subverted by it, 288; its prevalence foretold in Scripture, 289; probable design of Providence in permitting its temporary spread, *ib.*; the folly and impiety of embracing the system, 290; nominal Christians most in danger of falling into the snare, 292; motives to infidel zeal, 294; importance of guarding the young against it, *ib.*

Knowledge, the faculty of acquiring it constitutes the superiority of man over the brute creation, 376; its peculiar pleasures, 377; tends to exalt the character, and subdue sensuality, 378; the benefits it ensures to the poor, 379; Christianity friendly to its diffusion, 382; vast importance of religious knowledge, 385-388.

Law of England, necessity of revision and amendment in it, 224.
Locke, John, 429.
Lord's-day, profaned by military exercises in the last war, 360.

Mackintosh, Sir James, his early friendship with Mr. Hall, 9; their united studies, 11.
Man, his dignity, as derived from his probationary state and his immortality, 274.
Marriage, authorised and dignified by Christianity, 278; how regarded by infidels, *ib.*; its influence on the civilization of the world, 280.
Martin, Rev. J., 147.
Metaphysics, temporary popularity of writers in that branch of science, 427-429.
Middle Ages, peculiarities of the period so denominated, 173.
Millar, Professor, character of his work on the 'Constitution,' 449.
Millennium, the, a period of remarkable knowledge, 381.
Ministers, Christian, specially called upon to resist and expose infidelity, 256; their duty in regard to politics, 130-135, 234.
Morals, subverted by infidelity, 260-265; injurious effects of war upon, 308; corrupted by a lax theology, 351; and by the system of expediency, 355-356; comparison of the opinions of Hume, Aristotle and Cicero, 357.
Mysteries of revelation, importance of holding them fast, 350-365.

National Debt, consequences of its increase, 216.
National Judgments, 337; not always first inflicted on the guiltiest, 342; the hand of God to be acknowledged in them, 348-350.
National Sins, 346.

Occasional conformity, 53.
Overton, Rev. J., character of his 'True Churchman ascertained,' 502.

Paganism, its licentious tendency, 267; preferable to modern infidelity, 285.
Paley, character of his 'Evidences,' 252; his defence of ministerial influence, 190.
Parliament, its independence en-

cessary, 189; desirableness of reform in, 185-186; annual parliaments recommended, 187; influence of the peers deprecated, 190.
Parr, Dr., 41.
Party spirit, evils of, 190-192.
Pensions, 451.
Pitt, his political character, 160, 170; disastrous effects of his administration, 242.
Poor, the, affliction peculiarly felt by them, 318-322; duty of relieving, 324; degraded state in England, 223.
Price, Dr., 152, 235.
Pride, the most unsocial of the passions, 269; its misanthropy and selfishness, 270; its injurious influence, 270-272; religion, the only antidote to pride, 272; therefore hated by infidels, 273.
Priestley, Dr., 135; his political publications, 136.
Princess Charlotte, affecting circumstances of her death, 397, 403-405, 422; impressions produced by her removal, 417.
Profaneness, prevalence of, 361.
Providence, its dispensations to be observed, 394; the harmony of those dispensations with Scripture, 395; adaptation of, 396; importance of, 537.
Public opinion, its value and influence, 339.
Puritans, their zeal for freedom, 127; hinge of the controversy between them and their opponents, 454-456.

Reform, necessary to the political safety of the country, 168, 216; reasons for that necessity, 185, 221-23; principle on which it should rest, 186; extension of the suffrage, *ib.*; annual parliaments, 187; influence of the peers, 189; exposures of the pretences usually alleged for delay, 192-5; explanation of the term 'radical reform,' 236.
Reformation, the; its connection with the advancement of learning, 381.
Religion, its value and importance, 292, 381; its influence on the welfare of nations, 315, 317; distaste of religion manifested by fine writers, 445.
Repentance, its personal character insisted on, 345, 363.
Rights of Man, defined, 195; how far they are surrendered in a state of society, 196; absurdity of supposing them to be entirely given up, 197-99; opinions of Mr. Locke, 200.
Robinson, Rev. R., sketch of his character as a minister, 16.
'Romantic,' improper application of the term, 437.

Scotland; influence of education on its peasantry, 379.
Scripture, salvation by Jesus Christ, its distinguishing feature, 383-385; supplies an infallible rule of life, 385; its harmony with the dispensations of Providence, 394-395.
Sensibility, distinguished from benevolence, 322.
Sensuality, encouraged by infidel principles, 281; religion its only antidote, 282.
Septennial act, its inconveniences, 186.
Sinecures, 451.
Slave trade, 362.
Society, inequality of rank in, wisely ordered, 399.
Socinians, propriety of the appellation, 539.
Solon, singular law enacted by him, 171.
Sterne, 322.
Sunday Schools, seriousness with which religious instruction should be communicated in them, 387-389.

Technical terms, their excessive use

in religious works deprecated, 444.
Test Act, its inefficiency and iniquity, 144-150.
Tillotson, Archbishop; character of his works, 508.

Union of Christians urged by the prevalence of infidelity, 252.

Virtue, incapable of being sustained by infidelity, 260; President Edwards's definition, 284.

Walpole, Sir Robert, 188.
War, exemption of this country from its ravages, 302; the most awful scourge of Providence, 303; horrible waste of human life, 303-305; effects of, on the prosperity of a country, 306; founded in injustice, 308; its anti-moral tendencies and effects, 308-311; peculiar character of the French Revolution, 311-314.
Wilberforce, character of his work on 'Practical Christianity,' 351.
Zeal without innovation, review of, 457-503; its party-spirit and bigotry, 459; increase of the dissenters owing to their piety and zeal, 464; inefficacy of creeds and confessions to perpetuate religious belief, 464-465; absurdity of supposing that real religion would be promoted by the destruction of dissent, 469-471; union among Christians only to be attained through the increase of genuine piety, 471-472; decline of evangelical preaching, 477-479; its revival through the labours of Whitfield and Wesley, 479; opposition of the clergy, 479-481; answer to the charge of enthusiasm brought against the evangelical clergy, 489; defence of their method of preaching, 494-496; malignant spirit of the author exposed, 497; character of Whitfield and his coadjutors, 501; danger of excluding evangelical ministers from the established church, 503

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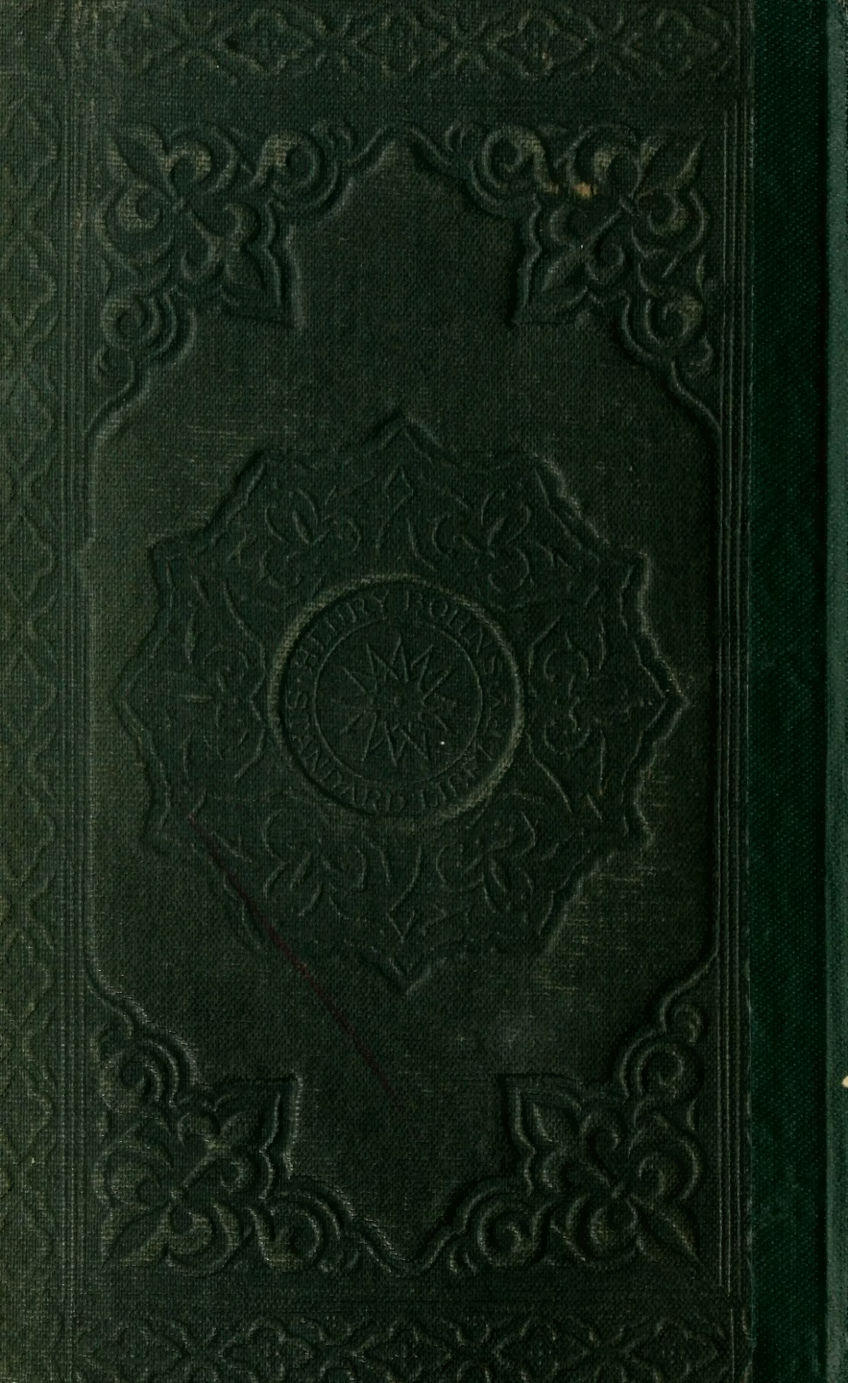
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